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David John Shirt, *'Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp': Attitudes to musical instruments in early Christianity – 680 A.D.*

## **Abstract**

*Arguments for the absence of instrumental music in early Christian worship are commonly founded on a corpus of texts which, in the main, describe the attitudes of their educated, elite authors towards worship within churches and other officially sanctioned venues of the Roman empire. This inevitably ignores much of the popular religious ritual associated with the non-elite Christian(ized) masses, seeking to maintain long held practices of self-expression through the use of audible pitch, rhythm, and bodily movement. Of equal significance in this context, it ignores huge swathes of the population, beyond the Mediterranean world, who, in more remote locations such as Ireland and Ethiopia, embraced Christianity and expressed it in the context of their own cultures. However important the Roman empire was, the horizons on which any assessment of musical practice is focused, must extend beyond its geographical borders. This not only involves examining a diversity of geographical locations, but a diversity of definitions regarding concepts of Christian worship. It is not only the attitudes of the elite, well aware of the disciplines of their philosophical/theological heritage, but the attitudes of the uneducated masses, whose religious practices were not necessarily in conformity with the desires and demands of Church authority, which provide the groundwork upon which this dissertation is built.*

*The time frame ending 680 A.D. represents a period offering fruitful research possibilities beyond the work done by others.*

**‘Sing to the Lord with the harp’:**

**Attitudes to musical instruments in early Christianity – 680 A.D.**

**By David John Shirt**

**Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Durham**

**Department of Theology and Religion**

**2015**

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## Abbreviations

- ANF* *ante-Nicene Fathers*, A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., Buffalo, 1885-96.  
*FC* *Fathers of the Church*, Roy Joseph Deferrri, ed., Washington, 1965.  
*HUCA* *Hebrew Union College Annual*, 1919-1968.  
*MECL* *Music in Early Christian Literature*, James McKinnon, Cambridge, 1987.  
*MW* *Music and Worship in pagan and Christian Antiquity*, Johannes Quasten, Washington, 1983.  
*NPNF* Series One, *The Nicene and post-Nicene fathers*, Series One, P. Schaff and N. Wace, eds., New York, 1890-1900.  
*NPNF* Series Two, *The Nicene and post-Nicene fathers*, Series Two, P. Schaff and N. Wace, eds., New York, 1890-1900.  
*PL* *Patrologiae cursus completes, series latina*, J.P. Migne, ed., Paris, 1857-66.  
*PG* *Patrologiae cursus completes, series graeca*, J.P. Migne, ed., Paris, 1857-66.  
*WPC* *The Works of Philo Complete and Unabridged*, C.D. Young, tr., Greenville, MS, 1993.

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David John Shirt, '*Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp*':<sup>1</sup> *Attitudes to musical instruments in early Christianity – 680 A.D.*

**Note:**

This thesis covers a very broad geographical, chronological and conceptual range. Whilst the majority of primary texts have been consulted directly, a significant number have been accessed through the work of other writers: through collections of extracts, or through citations in the secondary literature. In order to make clear the source of a primary text, two different forms of referencing have been adopted:

1. Where a primary text is consulted directly, the author, title and reference to the English translation is given both in the footnotes and in the final bibliography. These texts are listed in the bibliography under 'Primary Sources'.

2. Where a primary source is accessed through a citation in another work, the full bibliographical details of the secondary work, together with the reference to the primary source is given *as it appears in this work*. These references are listed in the bibliography under 'References to Primary Sources'.

As the secondary source authors have different referencing conventions, the references to primary sources accessed in this way do not necessarily conform to the conventions otherwise adopted in this thesis. A list of abbreviations is given in the bibliography.

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<sup>1</sup> Psalm 97: 5.

## Introduction.

This thesis argues that self-expression through the use of audible pitch and rhythm, combined with bodily movement, is an essential element of human evolution.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it is integral to human nature – most importantly in the context of facilitating communication,<sup>2</sup> whether person to person(s), or person to God(s), as well as being an obvious means of fulfilling the natural desire to share human experience. That such communication is facilitated by the creation and use of musical instruments is clearly observable throughout millennia of human history. That through regulatory suppression, their powerful role was totally removed in acts of worship in early Christian society, might indicate the aspirational directives of an ascetic elite. The obliging conformity of the masses would stretch credulity to breaking point.

That ‘musical embellishment’ can assist in conveying (if only for acoustic reasons of ‘carrying power’) the spoken word at ceremonies of Christian worship, would seem beyond doubt. It also highlights the importance of the message sung. As John Arthur Smith brings to our attention, ‘the purpose of cantillation was twofold: to carry the text clearly when it was read in assemblies, and to set sacred text apart from ordinary speech’.<sup>3</sup> The extent, however, to which any exhibition of emotionally charged musicality could, or should be encouraged on such occasions, clearly triggers differences of opinion, both for participants and observers at the time, and subsequent generations of commentators.<sup>4</sup> Whilst the attitude of the Fathers was generally positive about the chanted praise of God, restraint was cautioned, lest undue emotion or sensual indulgence in the beauty of sound, equate with mere ‘entertainment’ better

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<sup>1</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York, 2006), p. 23.

**Throughout this study, first reference is given in full. In subsequent references to the same work, a shortened form is used, e.g. Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets*, p. 23.**

<sup>2</sup> See for example, Brian C.J. Moore, ‘Basic auditory processes in the analysis of speech sounds’, in Brian C.J. Moore (ed.), *The Perception of Speech: From sound to meaning* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 65-67.

<sup>3</sup> John Arthur Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Farnham, 2011), p. 135.

<sup>4</sup> In such context the words of Aristides Quintilianus (of uncertain date, but generally considered to be not later than fourth century A.D.) may not seem inappropriate – that through the power of music ‘the hearer, by words and melodies, inveigling him, by subtle variations of sound and posture, [is brought] into conformity with what the words express’. The power and effect of music is not unlike that of rhetoric (discussed in chapter four); potentially it might be seen as an aid to rhetoric, with a capacity to stimulate not unlike Carol Harrison’s description of rhetoric as ‘the art of speaking in such a way that the hearer’s mind and emotions should be impressed and moved by what they heard, so that they assented to, and acted upon it’. Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2013), p. 37.

suiting to pagan than Christian life – or, by some deemed worse, resemble pagan worship.<sup>5</sup> In this context *instrumental* music could be seen as beyond the pale of moral decency. Indeed involvement in dance and instrumental music (in any area of Christian life – and most especially worship) fuelled heated condemnation in the writings of the Fathers, and no less heated controversy in the commentaries of later music historians. Centuries of such controversy poses the question central to this study:

*Did musical instruments play any part in early Christian worship?*

Examination of issues surrounding the use or suppression of musical instruments in early Christian worship, must, as a prerequisite, take account of, and with all appropriate diffidence, attempt some evaluation of the significant scholars who have contributed to the subject. High on the list of scholarly writers would appear such established figures as Edward Foley, James McKinnon, Johannes Quasten, Eric Werner, and more recently, Christopher Page, and John Arthur Smith. As might be expected, despite areas of substantial agreement, the works of these writers do not indicate any consensus regarding the practical question of to what extent, if any, musical instruments were used in early Christian worship. But an area in which two<sup>6</sup> of these writers – Foley and McKinnon – are in agreement, has, at face value, an ‘end of story’ connotation. In essence, they argue that early Christian worship inherited the practices of the Synagogue, where musical instruments were not used; that there did not evolve any tradition of musical instrument usage in Christian worship, and it is for that reason that the vehemently anti-instrumentalist statements of the early Fathers refer to secular locations of musical activity, not liturgical worship ‘in church’ – where there wasn’t any instrument playing for them to attack. Whether such an argument places a boulder totally across the path of this thesis, or presents diversions to explore, is a necessary preliminary investigation.

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<sup>5</sup> The possible influence of pagan hymnody and Hebrew psalmody on earliest Christian musical practices is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>6</sup> Three, if the limited reference to instrumental music made by Smith is included.

It may be questioned whether the situation has significantly changed since over a half-century ago, when Eric Werner wrote:

...in early Christianity, the primacy of vocal over instrumental performance seems so firmly established, so much of an a priori attitude, that it may sound preposterous to debate this matter anew. But it needs renewed examination, since being presented as a 'foregone conclusion', it has consistently confused every freer view and every unorthodox opinion, until it has become something of a dogma, blindly accepted by all students of ancient church music.<sup>7</sup>

Openness to likely diversity in early Christian worship can be observed in some examples of more recent scholarship. The use of musical instruments within that diversity is noted by Christopher Page, who writes of the possibility that 'rank-and-file Christians did not view the use of musical instruments in worship in the same way as the bishops and other polemicists who harangued them on the subject'.<sup>8</sup>

Within the bibliography of many works addressing music and worship, is the title *Instrumental Music Is Scriptural*, written in 1920 by O.E. Payne,<sup>9</sup> which, in forcefully expressing argument frequently raised by earlier and later writers, may, as a representative example, be aptly cited here. Whatever accolades history may or may not accord with O.E. Payne, such are unlikely to exceed the accolade he awards himself, when, in the Introduction, he writes 'No man of my acquaintance is better qualified to write such a book as this than is the one whose name appears in the title-page'. Like many writers on the subject, his passionate motivation appears to spring from a personal desire to justify the existence of instrumental music in worship, much as may be adjudged as the motivation of Payne's noted adversary M.C. Kurfees, author of *Instrumental Music in the Worship, or the Greek verb psallo philologically and historically examined*, written in 1911, to prove otherwise. These American protagonists, writing a century ago, crystallise the intensity of the debate which has maintained considerable prominence throughout almost two thousand years of writing on music in Christian worship.

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* (New York, 1959), p. 316.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Page, *The Christian West and its Singers: The First Thousand Years* (Yale, 2010), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> O.E. Payne, *Instrumental Music Is Scriptural* (Cincinnati, 1920).

Whatever the assessment of Payne's scholarship, he gathered a formidable array of supporting academics, on both sides of the Atlantic. He begins his treatise in authoritative style, '... let doubt depart that all may see and know that the New Testament authorizes the employment of the instrument as well as the voice in Christian worship'.<sup>10</sup> With these words, O.E. Payne concludes the first page of his 1920 monograph, *Instrumental Music Is Scriptural*, in which he draws the attention of the reader to those scholars (mostly American or German<sup>11</sup>) who concur with his translation/interpretation of the Greek verbs *adontes* and *psallontes* as to sing, and to play, and uses appropriate versions<sup>12</sup> of Ephesians 5:19 as evidence supporting the use of musical instruments in early Christian worship. He would, perhaps, find common cause over this passage from Ephesians, frequently rendered as 'singing and making melody to the Lord'<sup>13</sup> or 'sing hymns and psalms to the Lord with praise in your hearts',<sup>14</sup> with the contemporary Jesuit scholar, Nicholas King, whose 'freshly translated'<sup>15</sup> version, of 2004, accords with Payne, reading, 'singing and playing musical instruments in your hearts to the Lord'.<sup>16</sup> John Arthur Smith's 2011 publication *Music in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*, states 'the verb psallo originally meant "to play a stringed instrument with the fingers ... later, these words came to mean "sing to a plucked-string instrument"'.<sup>17</sup> The fundamental issue is of course that of identifying passages which may or may not be correctly interpreted allegorically.<sup>18</sup> On this, Payne<sup>19</sup> and Kurfees<sup>20</sup> strongly disagree.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> He cites, among others, Luther, Leander van Ek, Franz Schlachter and Eberhard Nestle, as well as principal academics of some forty Canadian and American universities.

<sup>12</sup> Where in translation into English, the words used describe singing and playing. See examples given below.

<sup>13</sup> Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition, 1946.

<sup>14</sup> *Good News Bible*, 1976.

<sup>15</sup> Publisher's wording.

<sup>16</sup> A considerable list of some forty notable American scholars of the day is given in support of Payne's argument that the N.T. passages he cites imply the use of musical instruments to accompany singing.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 41. Whilst concurring with Payne in the meaning of *psallo*, Smith is nonetheless of the opinion that early Christian music 'seems to have been entirely vocal'. See *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 27.

<sup>18</sup> Passages which may have both allegorical and practical meaning are discussed later.

<sup>19</sup> Payne, *Instrumental Music*, p. 95.

<sup>20</sup> M.C.Kurfees, *Instrumental Music in the Worship* (Nashville, 1999 [1911]), p. 132.



Proponents of instrumental music in Christian worship<sup>21</sup> are likely to present a picture of the disciples in Jerusalem attending the Temple ‘day after day’,<sup>22</sup> spending ‘all their time in the Temple giving thanks to God’.<sup>23</sup> It might be thought unlikely that such a large retinue of musicians as were employed by the Temple authorities would play no part whatsoever in the day by day, routine prayers of the third, sixth, and ninth hours.<sup>24</sup> If it cannot be claimed with certainty that the use of instruments was carried over into earliest Christian worship, such a *probability* can be claimed on the grounds that the customary worship of the first followers of Christ was frequently inclusive of instrumental music; unless, of course, they vacated the Temple at the hours of formal prayer (which is unlikely, since Acts 3:1 states that ‘Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer’).<sup>25</sup>

The opposing argument asserting that musical instruments were not used in earliest Christian worship (and indeed throughout the era of the early Fathers), is made by James McKinnon, who, in his 1965 dissertation,<sup>26</sup> regards the non-use of such instruments during earliest Christian worship as a continuation of non-use in the synagogue. McKinnon also argues in his 1965 dissertation that the vitriol with which the early Fathers attacked the use of musical instruments is directed towards their secular use, for example, their association with excessive indulgence at banquets or the dubious morality associated with the theatre,<sup>27</sup> and perhaps most importantly, their association with pagan worship. McKinnon maintains that there was no use of

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<sup>21</sup> For example Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Acts 2:46.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 24:53.

<sup>24</sup> Abraham Z. Idelsohn, *The Ceremonies of Judaism* (Cincinnati, 1930), p. 95. See also, Idelsohn, *Jewish Music in its Historical Development* (New York, 1948), p. 17, and Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (Philadelphia, 1969), p. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Kurfees argues that to participate in worship was not the motive of such visits to the Temple, but rather to evangelize, ‘to introduce the new religion’. See Kurfees, *Instrumental Music*, pp. 98-107.

<sup>26</sup> James McKinnon, *The Church Fathers and Musical Instruments*, PhD dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Philosophy, Columbia University, 1965.

<sup>27</sup> Controversy over ‘theatrical’ or otherwise inappropriate music has, of course, raged throughout the centuries. Amalarius, bishop of Lyon from 835, was blasted by his deposed predecessor, Archbishop Agobard, for introducing ‘theatrical sounds and stagy musical settings’ into the liturgy. On the latter, see Allan Doig, *Liturgy and Architecture* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 130. Interestingly, McKinnon, commenting on an earlier period, writes that ‘no Church Father ever complained of the church being turned into a theatre’, as proof of the absence of musical instruments ‘in church’ which might provoke such a complaint. See McKinnon, ‘The Meaning of the Patristic Polemic against Musical Instruments’ in *Current Musicology* 1 (1965), p. 77. But some twenty-two years later, in *MECL*, McKinnon quotes a passage from Jerome, *Commentarium in epistolam ad Ephesios* 3: 5: 19, ending in condemnation of ‘those who have made of God’s house a popular theatre’.

instruments in Christian worship, and therefore no need to specifically condemn it – hence he asserts that no reference to instruments in worship is to be found in the writings of the Fathers. Some twenty-two years later McKinnon published *Music in Early Christian literature*, a compilation of 398 extracts from the writing of the Fathers, in which music is, in some way, referred to. Whilst the vast majority of these extracts accord with the position taken in his earlier dissertation, a handful are sufficiently ambiguous as to ‘muddy the waters’ of his argument by raising the possibility that musical instruments in the context of worship are referred to, and in others, where the meaning of a particular passage may not be exclusively allegorical.

Examples of possible reference to the use of musical instruments in a more positive light include the frequently quoted passage from Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c.214), ‘if you should wish to sing and play to the cithara and lyre, this is not blameworthy’,<sup>28</sup> and the passage from Hilary of Poitiers (c.315-c.367), which McKinnon concedes as causing ‘considerable confusion among musicologists’<sup>29</sup> as a possible literal comment on the use of musical instruments:

Now, the varieties of function and kind in the art of music are as follows. There is a ‘psalm’ when the voice rests and only the playing of the instrument is heard. There is a ‘song’ (*canticum*) when the chorus of singers, using its freedom, is not bound in musical deference to the instrument and enjoys a hymn with sonorous voice above. There is a ‘psalm of a song’ when, after the chorus has sung, the art of the musical instrument is adapted to the hymn of human singing and the psaltery plays with equal sweetness to the measures of the singing voice.<sup>30</sup>

For McKinnon, clarification lies in acceptance of these references as relating to Old Testament, not Christian usage. The comment that *Instructio psalmorum* is ‘more

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<sup>28</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 2: 4 ANF 2, p. 249, PG VIII 444.

<sup>29</sup> MECL, p. 124.

<sup>30</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *Instructio psalmorum* 19: MECL, p. 124, PL IX, 244.

illustrative of Hilary's own thought than of that of the writers of the psalms'<sup>31</sup> may be thought to leave the issue open. McKinnon does concede however, of a passage from Origen (c.185-c.265) included in his compilation, that 'it is difficult to tell whether Origen refers to actual or merely figurative music':

For our mind cannot pray unless the Spirit, within its hearing as it were, first prays before it. Nor can it sing and hymn the Father in Christ with proper rhythm, melody, meter and harmony, unless the Spirit who searches all things, even the depth of God, has first searched the depths of the mind with praise and song and, as far as it is capable, has understood them.<sup>32</sup>

The possibility 'that the hymns were actually recited to instrumental accompaniment' McKinnon applies to a quotation from Synesius of Cyrene (c.370-c.414)<sup>33</sup>:

I was first to invent this meter,  
For thee, blessed, immortal,  
Illustrious offspring of the virgin,  
Jesus of Solyma,  
And with newly-devised harmonies  
To strike the cithara's strings.<sup>34</sup>

But this is not the only instance of psalms (on the whole, the term 'psalm' seems to be regarded as interchangeable with 'hymn'<sup>35</sup>) being described as accompanied by musical instruments. Not listed in McKinnon's *MECL* is the definition given by Didymus of Alexandria (c.309-c.394), 'Psalm is a hymn which is sung to the [accompaniment of the] instrument called psaltery or else cithara'.<sup>36</sup> Also not to be

<sup>31</sup> W. Sanday (ed.), 'Introduction to the Homilies on psalms I, LIII, CXXX, in *NPNF* 9, p. 235.

<sup>32</sup> Origen, *On Prayer* II: 4, *MECL*, p. 37, *PG* XI, 421.

<sup>33</sup> *MECL*, p. 56.

<sup>34</sup> Synesius of Cyrene, Hymn VII, 1-6, *MECL*, p. 56. *PG* LXVI, 1161.

<sup>35</sup> Not only by modern commentators, but by the Fathers, for example Gregory of Nyssa, *In inscriptiones Psalmorum* 2: 3: 23, in Ronald E. Heine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise on the Inscription of the Psalms* (Oxford, 1995), p. 129.

<sup>36</sup> Didymus of Alexandria, *Eis Psalmous*, 4: 1, Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, p. 203. *PG* XXXIX, 1166,

found in McKinnon's *MECL*<sup>37</sup> are similar definitions of psalms being accompanied, given by Gregory of Nyssa (c.330-c.395),<sup>38</sup> and his brother Basil (c.330-c.379), who distinguishes between a canticle and a psalm on the basis that one, but not the other, is instrumentally accompanied.<sup>39</sup> He writes, 'it is a canticle not a psalm: because it is sung with harmonious modulation by the unaccompanied voice and with no instrument sounding in accord with it'.<sup>40</sup> That several of the Fathers seem quite straightforward in their description of the psalm as being instrumentally accompanied, for example Augustine's comment 'But those are called psalms which are sung to the psalter',<sup>41</sup> is clearly possible evidence supporting the use of musical instruments in early Christian worship – arguably, to borrow McKinnon's often used phrase, even 'in church'.

Direct negative comment, which arguably opposes the use of instrumental accompaniment is given in Theodoret of Cyrus<sup>42</sup> (c.393-c.466), 'It is not singing as such which befits the childish, but singing with lifeless instruments ... wherefore the use of such instruments and other things appropriate to those who are childish is dispensed with in the churches and singing alone has been left over'.<sup>43</sup> The phrases 'the use of such instruments ... dispensed with in church' are to some extent an echo of the earlier comment of Clement of Alexandria, concerning instruments which 'we no longer employ' (*Protrepticus* 1), which would seem to refer to Old Testament use of instruments, or pagan use prior to Christianization. Quasten's translation, however,

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<sup>37</sup> Not that McKinnon lays claim to total inclusivity of references to music. For example, in *MECL* he writes 'perhaps further material will be uncovered when his [Gregory of Nyssa] works are thoroughly indexed', and 'I may have ... rejected certain items ... others [may have] escaped my notice'. See *MECL*, pp. 73 and viii.

<sup>38</sup> Gregory of Nyssa states the prime importance of the words in musical worship, as 'the meaning is most certainly not recognized when the tune is played on musical instruments alone' (*Treatise on the Inscriptions of the psalms* 2: 3; 25), in a way which has been reaffirmed throughout the centuries. But the statement does suggest the possibility of the suitability of instruments if not used alone. Earlier in *In inscriptiones* Gregory attempts definition of the blurred usage of the terms 'hymn' and 'psalm' by stating 'a psalm is the tune produced by a musical instrument', Hine, *Gregory of Nyssa's Treatise*, p. 129.

<sup>39</sup> Meeks implies that it is not possible to distinguish between hymns, psalms, and canticles, adding 'there is not much use trying', Meeks, *Urban Christians*, p. 144.

<sup>40</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Exegetic Homilies*, tr. A.C. Way, *The Fathers of the Church Series* (Washington, 1965), p. 278.

<sup>41</sup> Augustine, *Exposition of the Book of Psalms*, *NPNF* 8, p. 8.

<sup>42</sup> Quasten doubts that Theodoret is the author. See *MW*, p. 74.

<sup>43</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393-466), *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos*, *MECL*, p. 107. *PG* LXXXIII, 1001-2.

‘the use of such instruments with singing in church must be shunned’,<sup>44</sup> may be thought suggestive of instruments being used ‘in church’ prior to such a practice being (in Clement’s view) dispensed with. Quasten, however, does not subscribe to such an argument, but earlier writers J.N. Forkel, and J. Combarieu do.<sup>45</sup>

Some dilution of McKinnon’s position as given in his 1965 dissertation, is discernable from the dozen or so quotations (out of a total 398) given in his later *MECL*. However, while the overwhelming balance of this compilation supports his argument concerning the non-use of musical instruments, the questions triggered by that handful of quotations identified above might seem less than totally containable within the main thrust of his argument. Examples not included in his compilation,<sup>46</sup> may be seen as indicating that the final word has not yet been said. Very significantly, his dissertation, in addressing what did or did not take place ‘in church’ (which seems to carry the concomitant assumption that ‘in church’ encompasses *all* acts of worship), does not directly address a multitude of situations involving the devotional life of Christian communities, not only within the Roman empire, but, as discussed throughout this study, within the wider world as then known.

To have between the covers of one volume, *MECL*, a collection of almost four hundred quotations of musical relevance from the Fathers, is a contribution of enormous usefulness to the world of musicology. The direction in which it leads, however, must be influenced by how comprehensive a compilation it is deemed to be. Scholarship had not been uncritical of McKinnon’s 1965 dissertation.<sup>47</sup> Eric Werner observes:

The author had limited himself to a few selected Fathers, mostly of the Western Church; also his knowledge is limited. The Syrian, Armenian, and most of all the Byzantine Fathers have – luckily –

<sup>44</sup> In fact Johannes Ramsey’s English translation of Quasten’s German translation. See *MW*, pp 74-5.

<sup>45</sup> J.N. Forkel, *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik* II (Leipzig, 1801), p. 18. and J. Combarieu ‘La musique et la magie’, *Etudes de philologie musicale* III (Paris, 1909), p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Examples not in *MECL* are cited throughout this study.

<sup>47</sup> By the time of his dissertation, McKinnon had assembled ‘fewer than 100’ passages from the Fathers, concerning music. See McKinnon, *The Church Fathers*, p. 4.

escaped his attention, not to mention the Rabbinic authorities... nor has the author taken cognizance of my study, 'The conflict between Hellenism and Judaism...' (*HUCA*, 1947) where a great many Hebrew, Greek and Syriac documents are adduced.<sup>48</sup>

Werner's comments, intended for publication in 1974, but delayed until 1984, are to a considerable extent answered in McKinnon's 1987 *MECL* containing as it does, a broader compilation of extracts from the writings of the Fathers, and taking cognizance of some of Werner's studies.<sup>49</sup> McKinnon, however, does not address volume two of Werner's *The Sacred Bridge*, or 'Musical Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls',<sup>50</sup> which bears 'on the history of notation, [where] the use of musical instruments cannot be simply dismissed as allegorical or symbolical, since technical terms were employed that have direct application to real instruments'.<sup>51</sup> More recently (2010), the limitations of McKinnon's *MECL* have been noted by Christopher Page, who, noting movement in scholarship, since M.R. James'<sup>52</sup> and James McKinnon repudiated as 'loose speculation' the significance of Christ's dance in the Acts of John,<sup>53</sup> writes, 'It is a sign of how far things have moved, and how fast, that such a master of these arts as McKinnon finds very little space for apocryphal material in his indispensable collection of 1987 (*MECL*)'.<sup>54</sup>

### *Defining Christian 'worship'.*

A pivotal issue here is the type of activity defined as 'worship', and where it takes place. McKinnon seems clear and consistent about this, always using the expression 'in church',<sup>55</sup> which seems to convey the meaning of devotional activity in a church building. When discussing attacks by the Fathers on musical instrument playing, the

<sup>48</sup> Eric Werner, *The Sacred Bridge* II, (New York, 1984), p. 219.

<sup>49</sup> A considerable compendium of Werner's opinions are challenged in McKinnon's study, 'The Exclusion of Musical Instruments from the Ancient Synagogue' in *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 106 (London, 1979-80).

<sup>50</sup> Eric Werner, 'Musical Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls', in *The Musical Quarterly* xliii (1.) (1957).

<sup>51</sup> Werner, 'Scrolls', pp. 22 and 29.

<sup>52</sup> M.R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1926).

<sup>53</sup> This dance, with flute accompaniment, is discussed in chapter three of this study. See pp. 154-5.

<sup>54</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 10.

<sup>55</sup> E.g. 'There is not a single quotation which condemned the use of instruments in church' (McKinnon, *Church Fathers*, p. 262), and 'Evidently the occasion for speaking out against instruments in church never presented itself' (*Church Fathers*, Abstract).

target was never (because, he maintains, it was unnecessary) directed at activities ‘in church’. Whilst it might be appropriate to describe as worship all devotional activity taking place ‘in church’, that is not synonymous with asserting that all ‘worship’ necessarily takes place in church. If too narrow an approach is to be avoided, legitimate adjacent fields are locatable and worthy of examination. Examples, which might include vigils preceding great solemnities or festivals of the martyrs, funerals, weddings and other social-religious gatherings, are discussed later in this study. In some instances, archaeological excavation reveals sites sufficiently extensive as to suggest that such was the popularity of occasions including music and dance, that these gatherings may have involved a greater number of Christian worshipers than more formal, officially endorsed occasions ‘in church’. Of at least equal importance is the wider picture of Christian worship in more distant locations such as Ireland and north Britain, which seem free of the rebukes of elite moral indignation, or the vast and warmer climes of Ethiopia, where the dance and instrument playing of priests and deacons suggests these activities were not encumbered with the disapproval of ecclesiastical authority.

### ***Outline and objectives of this study.***

#### *Christian identity.*

If there is deemed to be evidence of instrumental music and dance having a significant role in the religious practices of early Christians – and of attempts by ecclesiastical authorities to suppress these activities – questions arise concerning the nature of any performance of music and dance during the early Christian centuries. The origins of objection to, or at very least mistrust of, music and dance, whether in the context of Christian worship, or Christian life more generally, must also be regarded as essential to discussion. In the first chapter of this study, these questions are approached through the subject of Christian identity, noting particularly the diversity of belief and practice that scholarship has brought to our attention. Central to this chapter is discussion of a subject, to some degree common to all (though hardly unifying all) early Christianity – the desire/need to evangelise. The geographically wide spread of Christianity within the time period ending 680 A.D., both within and beyond the Roman empire, is

relevant to this study. Cultural continuity is observable in the Christianized practices of peoples as disparate as northern Celtic Christians in and beyond Ireland and Britain, and southern Christians of Ethiopia. Likewise those who encountered Christianity's eastern progress through parts of India and China, as well as those of more central Christendom clustered throughout the Mediterranean world, all leave, it will be argued, little doubt as to the importance of instrumental music (and associated dance) in Christian worship during the period discussed in this study. It will be established that at various locations and times, such practices could be sanctioned by ecclesiastical authority and integral to the Church's official liturgy, or be preserved in the resilience observable, for example, in the graveside commemorative practices, frequently condemned by the Fathers, but stubbornly clung to by the converted masses.

At the 'ends of the earth', for example (as many Celtic missionaries regarded their location), music seems not only to have had a role, unmolested by ecclesiastical censure, in the lives of Christian people, but to have been an important tool of evangelisation. Pipes, drums, and the multi-toned hand bells (examples of which are extant) proclaimed the missionary's arrival, attracting the potential convert's attention, equally important, the power of the missionary's singing voice, according to Adomnan,<sup>56</sup> was frequently taken by pagans as representative of the power of the new faith. In the geographically contrasting location of Ethiopia (one of the first countries to officially adopt Christianity), centuries long virtual isolation left relatively intact practices of Christian clergy directly involved in the liturgical use of instrumental music and dance,<sup>57</sup> as evidenced and recorded by such writers as visited the country during the past six centuries.<sup>58</sup> Less documented, and offering much scope for research, our attention should not neglect such geographical areas as parts of India and China, where what appears to have been a more accommodating approach to the Christianization of existing religious practices legitimised a cultural continuity rich in choreographed melody and rhythm.

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<sup>56</sup> Discussed and referenced in chapter one. See pp. 25-6, and 134.

<sup>57</sup> As noted later, some instrumental activities (e.g. hymns sung and danced to the sistrum) show strong resemblance to those condemned in such texts as Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 4: 7, *MW* 93, *PG* 83: 452.

<sup>58</sup> Discussed and referenced in chapters one and three of this study. See pp. 23, 24, 35, 36, 155.



Also discussed in this chapter is the shared Christian concept of the heavenly Kingdom, and the common aspiration of admittance to it. Areas examined include the concept of heavenly music and dance, and the imagery observable in early Christian writing, where heaven is not infrequently depicted as resounding with music and dance in praise of God. Pursuance of the angelic life – the process of ‘making angels of men’ through ascetic practice – introduces the next chapter.

### *Asceticism.*

Journeying from ‘this world’ to the location of any future life in ‘the world to come’, a universally acknowledged desirability – and acceptability – of heavenly music and dance, is clear from many texts. Within the context of a study concerned with the practical role of music and dance in early Christian worship, questions arise, and are discussed, regarding the allegorical or practical interpretation of texts describing music, musical instruments, and dance. An advancing tide of asceticism characterised late antique Christianity following the conversion of Constantine in 312, and its adherents, who sought to separate themselves from the ‘world’, prompted diverse reactions which are relevant to our assessment of attitudes to the use or suppression of music and dance. The ascetics who sought to regain the life of Adam and Eve in Paradise, or achieve the heavenly life of angels, took a much more rigorous attitude to much that was commonly practiced and observed by the Christian ‘masses’, including their use of music. Chapter two examines the nature of their influence and attempts to assess the extent to which they affected the practices of the majority.

It will be seen that whilst, beyond the Roman empire (whether in Ethiopia to the south, or in Ireland to the north), the call to ascetic practice is clearly evidenced, in these areas, music and dance do not appear to be condemned. Not only are musicians free of the castigation heaped on the heads of their Mediterranean colleagues, but with (St) Kieran, after three days fasting, allegedly bringing eight dead harpists back to

life,<sup>59</sup> and Ethiopia's priests liturgically dancing and deacons drumming, the acceptance of music and dance, in worship as well as in Christian life more generally, is strongly suggested.

### *Musical performance.*

To this end, chapter three will examine the nature of musical performance. Given that practical music making, in the wider cosmopolitan world to which many Christians were exposed, was not extinct during the centuries of concern to this study, questions arise as to how music sounded, and how, to its listeners, it was heard. From surviving instrument fragments, written descriptions, and numerous artistic depictions (albeit of varying degrees of accuracy), well researched replica instruments have been made and played. A prominent figure in such research is Susanne Ruhling, whose work with the ensemble 'Musica Romana' has produced informative CDs<sup>60</sup> and whose involvement with The International Study Group on Music Archaeology, following their 2009 symposium in Berlin, will shortly see publication of Susanne Ruhling (ed.), *Ancient Sounds for Modern Ears: Archaeomusicology in Media and Performance*. The recordings of such ensembles as 'Musica Romano' give the best available intimation present research can offer regarding what such early music may have sounded like – unless and until work progresses far beyond that of Woodbridge, Kleiner and Astrom on the retrieval of antique sound from ceramics and paintings of the period, which is discussed in chapter three.

Chapter three will also consider the subject of musical notation, which has generated much solid scholarship – especially during the past seventy years. The discovery of 'The Dead Sea Scrolls' during this time revealed sufficient similarity between the neumes occurring repeatedly in manuscript margins and those contained in fifth – seventh century Byzantine *Kontakia*, to trigger considerable speculation as to how these examples of early hymnody might – melodically and harmonically – have

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<sup>59</sup> 'Life of St Kieran of Saighir' in Standish Hayes O'Grady (ed.), *Silva Gadelica* (New York, 1892), p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> See discography.

sounded.<sup>61</sup> The past fifteen years has seen publications by such music historians as Thomas J. Mathiesen, Charles M. Atkinson, and Stefan Hagel,<sup>62</sup> which convey a good measure of practical understanding to the subject of early notation. How widespread amongst practical musicians the use of written notation was, or the extent to which the ‘dancing hands’<sup>63</sup> of chironomy described similar shapes to the written neumes, remains, however, in the domain of the speculative.

As scholarly works<sup>64</sup> addressing this subject provide comprehensive coverage of the instruments in use, description of musical instruments in chapter three is limited to a fairly brief outline of those most used during the studied time period, with occasional reference to particular aspects of playing technique. Clearly the Fathers disliked some instruments more than others. Wind instruments, as discussed later, were particularly hated – especially the aulos. Strings fared a little better, with intermittent glimpses of toleration for kithara and harp. The hydraulis (water-powered organ) comes off best, with positive comments concerning its construction and powerful sound – ideal once the official status of Christianity removed the need of any secrecy in worship. That is not to say its actual use in Christian worship is condoned – or even mentioned. It is not from the texts of the Fathers, but from mosaics, sarcophagi, and slighter later references to ornate organ pipes that argument for its use in early Christian worship can be made. As discussed later, additional evidence might result from research into whether the modes to which extant pipe fragments were tuned, are compatible with modes approved for ecclesiastical use.

The inscribed sarcophagi discussed in chapter three, indicating the importance of hydraulis playing during the lives of the deceased, suggest an acceptance of such musicians by at least the Christian communities producing such inscriptions. The skill, training, and ‘professionalism’ of these players can only be conjectured. That

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<sup>61</sup> See discography.

<sup>62</sup> Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Nebraska, 1999); Charles M. Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus* (Oxford, 2009); Stefan Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music: A New Technical History* (Cambridge, 2010).

<sup>63</sup> A phrase attributed to Pseudo-Cyril, by Suzanne Haik-Vantoura, in *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (Berkeley, 1991 [1987]), p. 72, discussed in chapter three of this study.

<sup>64</sup> E.g. Mathiesen, Atkinson, Hagel, as noted above.

the ‘professional’ musician, along with others – actors, dancers – who perform in the theatre, were viewed by the Fathers as pursuing reprehensible occupations, which without repentance and reform would distance them from the Christian community, is clear. For example the condemnation of ‘a flutist or a citharist or a lyrist or a public dancer ... [who] shall either discontinue these things or be turned away’;<sup>65</sup> the censure extends to those who teach, and cantors who even learn to play the cithara,<sup>66</sup> leave no doubts concerning the disapproval of ecclesiastical authority. A history of cithara accompanied choir training, however, would seem to be evidenced by such musically active Syrians as Bardaisan (154-222), and Ephrem (306-373).<sup>67</sup>

### *Passions/emotions.*

The fourth and final chapter of this study is concerned with attitudes towards the emotions or passions in the context of early Christian use of music, instruments, and dance in expressions of worship. That classical philosophical reflection conditioned these attitudes is indicated in the writings of the Fathers, and clearly influenced by what John Corrigan calls ‘officially sanctioned religious emotionality’.<sup>68</sup> This background is briefly examined, from Aristotle’s concept of emotional catharsis, to the Stoic understanding of the passions. The extent to which the ‘officially sanctioned emotionality’ of an ‘elite’ authority failed to accommodate the emotional needs of non-elite ‘ordinary’ Christians is discussed in this chapter. Also discussed is the role of emotion and/or simulated emotion in public performance and the susceptibility of public assemblies to emotional infection. Examination of states of ecstasy, and of which musical instruments and types of music (danced to and not) are most likely to stimulate it, is included in this chapter.

As in other chapters of this study, when the Mediterranean world is the focus of our attention, ‘ordinary’ and ‘elite’ Christians seem not always to be ‘coming from’ the same mind-set, and not necessarily wishing to travel by the same path. Any summary

<sup>65</sup> *Canons of Basil*, 74, *MECL*, p. 120.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>67</sup> *Acta Ephraemi*, in *Ephraemi Syri Opera Omnia* 3, (Rome, 1742), *MW*, p. 108.

<sup>68</sup> John Corrigan, Introduction to John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretation* (Oxford, 2004), p. 19.

which suggests the not infrequent disappointment of ‘elite’ Christian Fathers, caused by the less than enthusiastic compliance of the ‘ordinary’ masses, to the directives placed before them, is as appropriate to the subject of passions or emotions as to other areas discussed in this study. The determination of ecclesiastical authority is clear; likewise the resilience of the masses.

What could be said of the social structure of the Roman empire, where, at the start of the period of concern to this study, less than an elite, half of one percent, of the empire’s population (50-60 million) governed the remaining, non-elite, ninety-nine and a half percent, formed a cultural background against which the expanding Christian Church evolved not dissimilar structures of governance. An objective of this study is to gain some understanding not only of elite attitudes and practices, but also of the ordinary masses, whose experiences have little or no direct voice in the writings passed down to us. Yet, as Robert Knapp brings to our attention, ‘Sometimes it is possible to garner insights into the lives of the invisible people even where none was intended and to amplify these by deploying perspectives and evidence from a variety of other sources’.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Robert Knapp, *Invisible Romans* (London, 2013), p. 3.

## Chapter one, Christian identity.

1. Introduction. 2. Common factors of Christianity. 3. Judaism and Christian Worship. 4. Christian identity and pagan practice. 5. The heavenly Kingdom: a shared Christian concept.

### 1. Introduction.

It is the main contention of this study that the use of music (vocal and instrumental) and dance, normative as forms of human expression, did not find an exception in the religious and secular practices of many early Christians – despite the dangers graphically described by the Fathers. The Fathers and others of the educated elite shared a concept of ‘music of the cosmos’ enunciated by Pythagoras. This was understood through analysis of its numerical form within the mathematical disciplines of the quadrivium,<sup>1</sup> and was quite distinct from the culture of practical music indulged in by the masses.<sup>2</sup> The desires of ‘ordinary’ Christians to perform practical music or to dance as an expression of feelings and emotions<sup>3</sup> were not infrequently regarded by the Fathers as warranting condemnation. Music (especially instrumental music) and dance were too tarnished by entwinement with pagan worship and immoral entertainment to be considered appropriate in Christian worship or indeed to Christian life. Such pagan usage is clear from the written evidence. Firmicus Maternus, writing a little before the mid fourth century, informed his readers that not only was ‘the tootling of flutes and the din of cymbals’<sup>4</sup> a familiar sound in pagan worship, but for the votaries of Attis at that time, actual musical instruments played ceremonially also served as receptacles for the distribution of a form of communion. Liquor, believed to be sacred, was taken from the cymbal and meat from the tambourine. Firmicus describes the claim of one such recipient – ‘I have eaten from the tambourine, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have mastered the secrets of religion’.<sup>5</sup> A century earlier,

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<sup>1</sup> Discussed in chapter three.

<sup>2</sup> That treatises such as Boethius’ *The Principles of Music* were not intended for practical musicians is bought to our attention by Guido d’Arezzo, who in the early eleventh century wrote of Boethius ‘whose book is not useful for singers, but only for philosophers’. Stated in a letter to a fellow Benedictine monk named Michael, Giulio Cattin *Music of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), I, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> The emotions/passions are the subject of chapter four of this study.

<sup>4</sup> Firmicus Maternus, *The Error of Pagan Religions* tr. Clarence A. Forbes (New York, 1970), ch. 4, p. 50.

<sup>5</sup> Firmicus, *The Error*, ch. 18, p. 81. Forbes suggests this practice dates from ‘towards the end of the empire’ – see his notes, p. 195, but also see below.

Clement of Alexandria brought similar practises to our attention, citing similar words – ‘I have eaten out of the drum, I have drunk out of the cymbal’ in the context of pagan initiation rites.<sup>6</sup> Little wonder, then, that any involvement with musical instruments or dance by the general Christian populace – the ‘ordinary’ Christians – was likely to attract a response of severe caution, if not outright condemnation, from many of the Fathers.<sup>7</sup>

The above said, however, within the diversity of Christian practices – which much modern scholarship has highlighted – musical activity, including instrumental, and dance, did persistently occupy a place, and in some locations (clearly including missionary activity at the fringes, as well as the heartlands, of early Christianity) found a measure of acceptability with Christian leaders. Whilst ambiguities concerning the role of music in Christian worship might occupy the minds and hearts of the Fathers, at their feet, ‘ordinary’ Christians sought occasions to express themselves through their customary means.<sup>8</sup> They leapt in the air,<sup>9</sup> swayed to the beat of the drum,<sup>10</sup> wailed through the aulos,<sup>11</sup> and the strains of the lyre punctuated their hymns.<sup>12</sup> The subject of this dissertation being ‘attitudes to musical instruments’, both the use and suppression of musical instruments, and indeed of music and dance generally, in acts of Christian worship – 680 A.D., are examined.

## 2. Common factors of Christian identity

Given the diversity apparent in early Christianities, and therefore the diversity of Christian identity, questions are begged concerning what, if anything, may be seen as binding Christians together. Clearly Christians were to a considerable extent united

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<sup>6</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, ANF 2, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> In many systems of religious belief, percussion instruments are employed to stimulate intense emotion in the players and hearers. As Gilbert Rouget writes, the ‘frequently dramatic or obsessive use to which it is put, indisputably confer[s] upon the drum a particularly strong emotional impact ... the drum is regarded as the instrument par excellence of frenzy’. See Gilbert Rouget, *Music and Trance: A Theory of the Relations between Music and Possession* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 169 and 170.

<sup>8</sup> A reoccurring subject throughout this study.

<sup>9</sup> The ‘leap dance’ is discussed later. See p. 154.

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 23-4.

<sup>11</sup> For example, use of the aulos in lament, as discussed in chapters three and four of this study. See pp. 146, 158, and 159.

<sup>12</sup> See reference to the *Canons of Basil* later in this chapter, and wider discussion in chapters three and four.

within their local Christian communities, but what common bonds linked Christian communities, especially where doctrinal division and concomitant struggles to gain the upper-hand of orthodoxy are so vividly described in surviving texts? What visible signs were recognisable as integral to the identity of being ‘Christian’ – even though identity as a believer *in* Christ could not produce unanimity as to what was believed *about* Christ? It would somehow be reassuring to any concept of the Christian message of ‘love’ to be able to argue that such brotherly/sisterly affection governed the relationship of adherents to one form of doctrinal constructs with those of another. At the level of the written word, this could perhaps be argued. Cyril, writing to his adversary, Nestorius, expressed such an ideal:

I am writing these things even now, impelled by the love of Christ, exhorting you as a brother, entreating you in the sight of God and of his chosen angels, to believe and teach these truths together with us, in order to keep peace among the Churches, and so that the bond of concord and love among the priests of God may remain unbreakable.<sup>13</sup>

But such sentiments seem imbued with irony, when seen in the context of actions ‘on the ground’ – the bribery, intrigue, intimidation, and violence surrounding Church Councils come closer to reality.<sup>14</sup> The entreaty to love one another, did not always seem to encompass the brother Christian with whom one had theological disagreement. Yet within their different doctrinal/ritual parameters certain common practices are clearly observable, for example baptism;<sup>15</sup> the ‘shared meal’;<sup>16</sup> use of the Psalms;<sup>17</sup> the desire to evangelise.

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<sup>13</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, Letter II to Nestorius, Luigi Gambero, *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* (San Francisco, 1999), p. 24. PG 77, 44-49.

<sup>14</sup> Beyond occasional reference, discussion of such disputes lies beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>15</sup> Whilst at first glance baptism may be seen as a common bond between Christians, the circumstances under which it may take place, argue more for disunity than unity. Examples might include its deferred use; in some instances repeated use – even annually; its selective use – Aphraates, for example, advocating baptism as a privilege reserved for monks – for discussion see F. Crawford Burkitt, *Early Christianity Outside the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 1899), pp. 46-54. These would suggest sufficient disparity to challenge, or at least indent any notion of baptism as a ‘bond’ between Christian groups.

<sup>16</sup> For early generations of Christians the concept that ‘we many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread’. (1 Corinthians 10.:17) did not prevent the practice of mixed table-fellowship between Jewish and gentile Christians being challenged by Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, who, concerned with issues of food regulation and circumcision, withdrew from mixed fellowship, only to be admonished by Paul (e.g. Galatians 2, 11-14 and Romans 14. 14). Other problems associated with the shared meal (e.g. social status) are discussed later.

<sup>17</sup> Even here however, disunity is apparent in the rejection of the Psalms (and all else of the ‘Old Testament’) by the not inconsiderable number of Marcionites (Marcion, d. 160 A.D., but Marcionite



Some form of the ‘shared meal’, different in time and place to the extent that Socrates comments, ‘... it is impossible to find anywhere, among all the sects, two churches which agree exactly in their ritual’,<sup>18</sup> nonetheless, from earliest times, is identifiable as the central act of Christian worship. From the musical standpoint, as the structures underpinning worship became more formulated, evolving ecclesiastical authority seems to have favoured unaccompanied voices. As Carol Harrison writes, ‘The fathers tend to advocate – and even then in a guarded and uneasy manner – only the use of the human voice, a simple unadorned chant’.<sup>19</sup> Certainly in the Mediterranean world, from the third and fourth centuries, this view seems to have largely prevailed, at least to the extent of liturgical ceremonies taking place ‘in church’. It is clear however, both from Christian and non-Christian sources, that the use of musical instruments, played by ‘ordinary’ Christians persisted. The subject is examined later in this study – from Celsus remarking that Christians ‘excite their hearers to the point of frenzy with flute music like that heard among priests of Cybele’,<sup>20</sup> to a string of canons promulgated by successive councils denouncing the use of the cithara by cantors, who, according to the *Canons of Basil*, must not even learn to play it – ‘When a reader learns to play the cithara, he shall be taught to confess it ... if he persists in it, he must be discharged and excluded from the church’.<sup>21</sup> The continued persistence of instrument playing cantors is implied by the comment in *De ecclesiasticis officiis* (c. 830 A.D.) which states ‘our cantors hold in their hands neither cymbals, lyres, nor any other type of instrument’.<sup>22</sup>

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communities continued to exist until at least the fourth century) who composed psalms and hymns of their own. See chapters three and four of this study.

<sup>18</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5: 22, *NPNF*, Second Series, II, p. 132. This is explored further in chapters three and four.

<sup>19</sup> Carol Harrison, ‘Enchanting the Soul: The Music of the Psalms’, A. Andreopoulos, A. Casiday and C. Harrison (eds), *Meditations of the Heart: The Psalms in Early Christian Thought and Practice. Essays in Honour of Andrew Louth* (Turnhout, 2011), p. 219.

<sup>20</sup> Celsus, *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, tr. R. Joseph Hoffmann (Oxford, 1987), p. 71.

<sup>21</sup> *Canons of Basil*, c. 74, *MECL*, p. 120. W. Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien* (Leipzig, 1099), p. 267. .

<sup>22</sup> Amalarius (d. c. 850), *De ecclesiasticis officiis libri IV*, cited James McKinnon, ‘Musical Instruments in Medieval Psalm Commentaries and Psalters’, *Journal of the American Musicology Society* 21 (1968), pp. 11-12. *PL* 116, 1577.

The surge in monasticism and asceticism which, in the fourth century, followed the end of official persecution of Christians, saw also a surge in sung rendition of the Psalms, which became widespread in Christian devotion. Carol Harrison writes:-

... the words of the Psalms, and above all their sound, resonated within the early Christians' ears and minds, shaping their understanding of their faith, informing their thoughts, feelings and language, inspiring their prayers, and motivating their actions at every turn and in every place, circumstance and context.<sup>23</sup>

But whilst the initiation of baptism, some form of 'shared meal', and, with varying levels of melodic inventiveness, the musical rendition of psalms, may be seen as illustrating activities widespread throughout the diversity of early Christianities, another area may vividly demonstrate a uniformity of desire – yet again one that may bring Christian groups into conflict with each other – the desire to evangelise.

#### *Christian identity and 'the ends of the earth'.<sup>24</sup>*

The rapid geographical expansion of Christianity throughout large tracts of the then known world is of prime importance to this study. Whether seen in terms of travelling missionaries proclaiming their Christian identity, or the Christian communities they established expressing their new faith, music and dance play a vital role. It may or may not be the case that the voice of ecclesiastical authority, in its music and dance condemning capacity, seemed more distant in the far-flung territories of missionary activity. Perhaps the preferred tool of evangelisation was not directly to oppose the practices (beliefs/'superstitions') of the peoples encountered. Doubtless practical considerations also played a part, for example the ratio of missionaries to converts. As Bernard Hamilton writes (though referring primarily to 'Europe'), 'there were seldom

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<sup>23</sup> Harrison, 'Enchanting the Soul', p. 207.

<sup>24</sup> This illustration sketches the cultural contrasts evident in some 'far flung' (Egypt being included only because of its role in the early establishment of Christianity in Ethiopia and Sudan) locations of early Christianity, selected for the demonstrable musicality of their cultures 'carried over' into Christian worship. Other locations, especially those in the vicinity of the Mediterranean, receive attention elsewhere in this study.

enough priests to instruct new converts ... and a network of churches was established only very slowly ... [consequently] paganism was practiced alongside a nominal form of Christianisation'.<sup>25</sup> Be that as it may, stringent confrontation with non-Christian culture being sufficiently mellowed, the nations receptive to Gospel proclamation performed their acts of Christian worship with little to inhibit the use of music and dance in ways normal to their culture. To the brief examples given earlier in this chapter, and the more comprehensive examination given in chapters three and four of this study, a sketched illustration of music and dance encountered in selected locations throughout the wide geographical areas of Christian evangelisation may not be inappropriate here.

### *Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan.*

In this chapter, which is concerned with Christian identity, instances are cited to illustrate not that music and dance were unique to Christian identity, but that Christians were as likely as any others to proclaim their religious or cultural identity in diverse musical ways. As Ragheb Mofteh, who spent decades (he lived to be 103) researching and recording<sup>26</sup> (in both notational and audio<sup>27</sup> format) early Coptic chants, writes as a prelude to his description of Coptic music:-

Every country ... had something unique to contribute to the music of its own Church – something local derived from the traditions of the people and springing from their very nature ... when the ancient Egyptians became Christians, they carried much of their art and music into Christianity.<sup>28</sup>

The 'art and music' of ancient Egyptians is profusely illustrated in numerous depictions of musicians of Ancient Egypt – including temple musicians – in paintings,

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<sup>25</sup> Bernard Hamilton, *Religion in the Medieval West* (London, 1986), p. 99. As stated elsewhere in this study, any attempt to define the quality of Christian belief, e.g. whose Christianity is 'nominal' and whose 'fully Christian' is taken as beyond its remit. On educational policies and the process of Christianisation see Chad Kile 'Feeling Persuaded: Christianization as Social Formation', Willi Braun (ed.), *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities* (Waterloo, Ontario, 2005), pp. 219-248.

<sup>26</sup> Mention should also be made of ethnomusicologist Jean Jenkins whose work in the 1970s and 1980s on Ethiopian music is evidenced in a series of recordings issued by Tangent TGS. See p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> See discography.

<sup>28</sup> Ragheb Mofteh, 'Coptic Music', Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, *St Mark and the Coptic Church* (Cairo, 1968), pp. 159 and 196.

reliefs, and murals which demonstrate the extensive range of instruments used. Others show a lone instrumentalist playing directly to a god as an act of devotion.<sup>29</sup> Whilst the evolving Coptic Christian liturgy embraced (albeit with some monastic reservation) sung rendition of the psalms, the clearly persistent use, by some Christian groups, of musical instruments and dance, was sufficient to provoke the condemnation of ecclesiastical authority. In Egypt, for example, Theodoret complained of the Meletians because they accompanied their hymn singing with bells and dance.<sup>30</sup> It was, however, common-place in Coptic liturgy to indicate the start of worship with the sound of clappers (a type of castanets) or bells.<sup>31</sup> Further south, the sistrum of the cult of Isis, found its way into earliest Ethiopian Christian liturgy,<sup>32</sup> where musical instruments – certainly to the extent of an array of percussion<sup>33</sup> – were used ‘in church’ and, as Henry Chadwick commented, orthodoxy regarded dancing as an ‘approved vehicle of religious expression’,<sup>34</sup> the *debteras* (musicians/teachers having ecclesiastical recognition<sup>35</sup>) displaying great expertise in music and dance.<sup>36</sup> Use of cymbals and the large cone-shaped drum – the *kebero* – accompanying the chanting of swaying priests appears characteristic of Ethiopian Christian worship, persistent from earliest times.<sup>37</sup> The *Mazqaba Degwa* (Treasury of Hymns) traditionally attributed to Yared (505-571 A.D.) indicates singing accompanied by musical instruments. Chants in quicker tempi involve hand-clapping as well as sistrums and various sized drums. Earlier chant associated with Frumentius, Ethiopia’s first archbishop (ordained as archbishop in 330 A.D.), is also considered to have absorbed ‘the customs and lifestyles of Ethiopia which include its language and traditional music’.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Lise Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1991), p. 58.

<sup>30</sup> Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 417, *MW*, pp. 98 and 120, *PG* 83: 425.

<sup>31</sup> Ragheb Mofteh, ‘Coptic Music: Musical Instruments’, Aziz S. Atiya (ed.), *The Coptic Encyclopedia* (New York, 1991), VI, p. 1738. The above article states that a number of small bells dating from the third to sixth centuries, and decorated with the cross, have been found in Fayyum and other locations of early Christianity in Egypt.

<sup>32</sup> *MW*, p. 99.

<sup>33</sup> That during Lent, the *bagana* (lyre) may have replaced percussion instruments, see Michael Powne, *Ethiopian Music* (New York, 1968), pp.85-6 and 108.

<sup>34</sup> Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (London, 1967), p 275.

<sup>35</sup> Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians* (Oxford, 1965), p. 108.

<sup>36</sup> Powne, *Ethiopian Music*, pp. 105-118.

<sup>37</sup> See discography.

<sup>38</sup> Brahana Selassie, *Towards a Fuller Vision: My Life and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church* (London, 2000), p. 82.

Amongst the later evidence indicating a continuity of earlier practices, a well documented account of the survival of liturgical music and dance in Ethiopia is provided by Portuguese Jesuit, Jerome Lobo, who describes a scene reminiscent of Theodoret's account of the Meletians<sup>39</sup> In 1627, Lobo wrote:

In their [Ethiopians] rites of worship are little drums, which they hang about their necks and beat with their hands – these are carried even by their chief men, and by the gravest of their ecclesiastics ... when they have heated themselves by degrees, they leave off drumming and fall to leaping, dancing, and clapping their hands, at the same time straining their voices to their utmost pitch...<sup>40</sup>

Commenting in 1873, Amelia B. Edwards, in her account *A Thousand Miles up the Nile*, describes how children joined 'the choristers in a wild kind of chant'.<sup>41</sup> A slightly later example, one illustrating the continuing use of music and dance in Christian religious procession is given by Jean Duresse, writing (in the late 1950s) of the *debteras* approaching Aksum cathedral on the Feast of Our Lady of Zion:

To the beat of the drums, which are solemn and slow, the clergy advance in two long lines, facing each other in their embroidered capes and snow-white turbans, lifting the sistrum, a legacy of the ancient Egyptians, meeting, crossing, and retreating in a very slow dance which dates from time immemorial.<sup>42</sup>

Ullendorff contributes the substantial suggestion that:

Many of the existing uncertainties about musical patterns that were used by singers and instrumentalists in biblical times could be removed by a thorough study of the Ethiopian liturgical chant and the musical instruments still in use.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See p. 23.

<sup>40</sup> Jerome Lobo, *A Voyage to Abyssinia* [1627] (English edition, London 1887), p. 39.

<sup>41</sup> Amelia B. Edwards, *A Thousand Miles up the Nile* (London, 1877), p. 460.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Duresse, *Ethiopia* (London, 1959), p. 221.

<sup>43</sup> Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 173.

Such an assertion finds resonance with the comments of ethnomusicologist Jean Jenkins:

Since the Council of Chalcedon, Ethiopian Christians have been isolated from the rest of the world, and their music may therefore be the most ancient church music in existence, Their priests still beat the large drums and dance before the *tabot* (which symbolise the Ark of the Covenant); priests and congregation use the sistrum.<sup>44</sup>

In the context of Ethiopia – subject to the ecclesiastical authority of Egypt<sup>45</sup> – the worship-life of many ‘ordinary’ Christians would seem to have embraced practices rejected by more ascetic thinking associated with the dedicated monasticism which sprawled the country of the ‘parent’ Church. Quasten reminds us, ‘popular tradition thus showed itself more powerful than the inflexibility of the monastery’.<sup>46</sup> Indeed at the more cautious end of monastic thinking, Pambo (d. c. 375), a follower of Antony of Egypt, advises that singing should not strive to be too melodious for fear of this adversely effecting the monks sense of contrition.<sup>47</sup>

*Land, river, and ocean: Celtic Christianity and the peregrini.*

For Christian and non-Christian alike, music served not only as a vehicle for their own physical and emotional expression of belief, but as a means whereby the attention of onlookers/potential belief-sharers, could be attracted through eye-catching spectacles of dance, and ear attracting strains of music. An illustration of early first century A.D. Jewish processions including music and dance is given by Philo when writing of the Therapeutae in the context of festive processions, ‘they dance and call on God in their songs’.<sup>48</sup> A second century A.D. pagan example may be seen in the

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<sup>44</sup> Jean Jenkins, notes to accompany CD *Music from Ethiopia*, Tangent Records, 1970, reissued as CD in 1984. See discography.

<sup>45</sup> Athanasius ordained Frumentius, first archbishop of Ethiopia, establishing a canonic jurisdiction over the country. Only in 1948 did this jurisdiction formally come to an end – at least to the extent that the Coptic Church agreed that in future only an Ethiopian should be appointed primate. See Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>46</sup> *MW*, p. 99.

<sup>47</sup> Tim Dowley, *Christian Music: A Global History* (Oxford, 2011), p. 38.

<sup>48</sup> Philo, *De vita contemplative* 11: 83, *WPC*, p. 705-6.

arrival of the eunuch priests as described by Apuleius in *The Golden Ass*, as ‘leading the Goddess [statue of Isis] in procession, he [a member of the group] would walk in front playing the horn’. In this instance accommodation was offered to the priests and their entourage by ‘a very-religious minded man ... [who had] heard the tinkle of our cymbals, the banging of our tambourines and the melancholy Phrygian music of the horn’.<sup>49</sup>

The processional chanting and bell ringing of Patrick and his companions in Ireland, or Kentigern or Ninian in Scotland likely achieved similar effect.<sup>50</sup> Bells belonging to early missionaries in Scotland seem to have survived. Alexander Penrose Forbes gives references dating from 1506, 1684, and 1872,<sup>51</sup> tracing Ninian’s bell, and a bell allegedly used by Adomnan is preserved in the museum at Kilmartin. The tinkling bell, the pipe and the drum might induce curiosity as to source and purpose, and the religious identity of those approaching. In the north of Britain, in the opinion of music historian John Purser, a form of triple pipes, a four sided hand bell struck externally to produce different notes on each of its faces, and the drum, were used to accompany psalms.<sup>52</sup> The activities of Celtic missionaries were not, of course, confined to Ireland and north and west Britain. Irish missionaries, during the latter part of the time-line of this study, evangelised through the length of the Rhine as far as Lake Constance (on the present Swiss border) and beyond.

Evidence of Christianity’s push towards the ‘ends of the earth’ is multi-directional. The Irish *immrama*<sup>53</sup> posit the possibility of long sea voyaging, even trans-Atlantic voyages, in ‘Brendan the Navigator’ (d. 570 A.D.) type leather boats (currachs) of the early centuries A.D. This was successfully put to the test in 1976/7 by the voyage of

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<sup>49</sup> Apuleius, *The Golden Ass*, tr. Robert Graves (London, 1950), pp. 200 and 203.

<sup>50</sup> It can only be speculated how, a millennium and a half ago, ears unused to the sound of distant traffic, or the sudden nearness of swooping jets rehearsing their low-level tactics, might respond to the more gentle sounds carried in the wind.

<sup>51</sup> Alexander Penrose Forbes, *The Historians of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1874) V, p. 285.

<sup>52</sup> The speculated sounds produced may be heard on the CD, supervised by Purser, *The Kilmartin Sessions: the Ancient Sounds of Scotland*. See discography.

<sup>53</sup> See chapter two, p. 93.

Tim Severin.<sup>54</sup> By his crossing the Atlantic in a reproduction leather boat, a little fuel was lent to fire romantic concepts of early Christian settlement in Newfoundland. Whatever the speculation concerning the likelihood of the *peregrini* travelling so far, the first ‘leg’ of Severin’s journey – to Iceland – very probably followed the route of Irish Christian missionaries, as strongly suggested in written sources. Travels north were clearly known to Cormac<sup>55</sup> and Dicuill’s reference to Thule<sup>56</sup> is generally considered to be Iceland. The Christian settlement there (like many other locations) seems to have been abandoned following the arrival of the Norse (‘Vikings’) in the 800s. From the *Islendingabok* we learn that the Christian missionaries left behind – suggesting a hurried if not enforced departure – books, crosiers, and, significantly, bells.

#### *India, Tibet, China, ...*

In a totally different direction, the progress of Christian missionaries to India is indicated in the second century (?) *Acts of Thomas*. This romanticised account of the travels of Thomas describes the conversion of Gundaphorus, ‘King of India’.<sup>57</sup> Malabar Christians (‘Thomas Christians’) claim their Church was founded by Thomas the Apostle. The existence of a fourth century monastery in India, dedicated to Thomas, would seem to be substantiated by Zodae, a monk at that monastery, who, in 363 A.D.<sup>58</sup> wrote a *Life of Hermit Yonan*. He (Yonan) purportedly travelled to India from Anbar (Bagdad). Ephraem, writing in Edessa in the 360s seems to accept that Thomas died in India, describing the claim of the Devil concerning ‘The Apostle I slew in India’.<sup>59</sup> Mention of Thomas in India is also made in the writings of Gregory of Nazianzus, Ambrose, and Jerome.<sup>60</sup> An earlier assertion of Christianity in India is

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<sup>54</sup> See J.J. O’Meara ‘In the Wake of the Saint: *The Brendan Voyage*, an Epic Crossing of the Atlantic by Leather Boat’, Jonathan M. Wooding (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 109-12.

<sup>55</sup> See Adomnan, *Life of Saint Columba*, referred to later in this study.

<sup>56</sup> Dicuill, *De mensura orbis terrae*, written around 825 A.D.

<sup>57</sup> Lack of any records of Gundaphorus in the annals of Indian history was amended in the 1880s by finds of coins bearing his name, See Joseph Thekkedath, *A Short History of Christianity in India* (Bangalore, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>58</sup> Herman D’Souza, *In the Steps of St Thomas* (Mylapore, 1952), p. 34, citing Labourt, *Le Christianisme dans l’Empire Perse*.

<sup>59</sup> Ephraem, *Nisibene Hymn* 42: 1, *NPNF* Second Series, 13, p. 205.

<sup>60</sup> Thekkedath, *Christianity in India*, p. 4.



made by Eusebius who writes of Pantaenus visiting that country around 190 A.D.<sup>61</sup> One 'John of Persia', a bishop signing the Decrees of the Council of Nicaea, did so as representing the 'Churches in the whole of Persia and Great India'.<sup>62</sup> Be that as it may, from the fourth century onwards, Nestorians from Persia crossed the Khyber Pass into north India, and sailed the Persian Gulf to south India. According to Cosmas Indicopleustes, a sixth century merchant traveller, who may have later become a monk, 'There is a church of Christians in the land called Malabar where the pepper grows ... there is a bishop ... and ministers from Persia'.<sup>63</sup>

Both written evidence and tradition indicate that the cultures encountered by missionaries to India were laden with music and dance used in religious practices.<sup>64</sup> Certainly such missionaries absorbed and shared in a prevailing attitude of religious co-existence to an extent that would have been extremely problematic further west.<sup>65</sup> As John C. England expresses it, 'Jain, Jew, Christian, Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu preserved their own identity, and modified each other's practice'.<sup>66</sup> For 'Thomas Christians' historical song traditions associated with the *Thomas Rabban Pattu* (Song of Thomas), and the *Margam Kali Pattu* (Song of the Way) indicate a variety of music and dance as integral to India's early Christian worship.<sup>67</sup> The concept of physical involvement in Christian worship is expressed in the Nestorian liturgy for the Feast of the Holy Nativity – 'Let the priests who surround the altar clap their hands, and let the Church dance for joy'.<sup>68</sup>

The arrival of Syrian missionary Alopen in 635 A.D.<sup>69</sup> during the early years of the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.) is often cited as the starting-date of Christian worship in

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<sup>61</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5: 10, *NPNF*, Second Series, I, pp. 224-5.

<sup>62</sup> Mathew, *Indian Churches*, p. 17.

<sup>63</sup> Basil Mathews, *Forward Through the Ages* (New York, 1951), p. 65.

<sup>64</sup> Anand Amalada, *Musical Spring: Christian Music Exponents in Tamilnadu* (Chennai, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>65</sup> It may be noted in passing, that as late as 1599 A.D., the Synod of Daimper decreed (5: 14) that Hindu musicians assisting at mass, must leave the church at the end of the creed. See A.M. Mundadan, 'Indian Ecclesia: An Interreligious Community', in Anthony Kalliath (ed.), *Pilgrims in Dialogue* (Bangalore, 2000), p. 410.

<sup>66</sup> John C. England, *The Hidden History of Christianity in Asia* (Hong Kong, 2002), p. 66.

<sup>67</sup> England, *Hidden History*, pp. 118-9.

<sup>68</sup> George Percy Badger, *The Nestorians and Their Rituals* (London, 2009 [1852]) p. 34.

<sup>69</sup> This information, derived from an inscribed stone erected in 781 A.D. is briefly discussed in chapter three of this study.

China. Amongst claims that Christianity may already have made some inroads into China before the arrival of Alopen is the attribution of earlier (?fifth century) building in Turpan as Nestorian,<sup>70</sup> a pre-Tang iron cross found in Jiangxi province,<sup>71</sup> and the association (albeit contested) that stone carvings of the Han dynasty, dating from the late first century A.D. depict Christian scenes.<sup>72</sup>

The Nestorians seem to have been accommodating towards the cultures they encountered (equally, those cultures were accommodating towards them) – to the extent of depictions in art showing the cross emerging from the lotus flower,<sup>73</sup> against the background of a cloud, thereby combining Christian, Buddhist, and Taoist emblems.<sup>74</sup> Whilst there is little hard evidence on which to speculate, the accusation of Western Christians, that the Nestorians were too tolerant of Buddhist and Taoist conceptions<sup>75</sup> would sit uneasily with any concept of a ‘hard line’ being taken over the use of music and dance when the surrounding cultures made such extensive use of them. It could be argued, however, that any such tolerance shown by the Nestorians hardly reflected the harder line taken by Nestorius some three centuries earlier, when, as bishop of Constantinople, he chased dancers out of the city.<sup>76</sup> In any event, toleration of post-Alopen Nestorianism lasted little more than two centuries, only the first half century of which lies within the time span of this study (–680 A.D.). Approaching the date of their suppression (845 A.D.), the Chinese poet Po Chu-i indicated a hardening of attitude of Buddhist monks (and possibly their Christian counterparts) towards music – this being contiguous with an expanding elitist monasticism. He wrote:

... One does not hear songs and flutes, but only chimes and bells.

... In a hovel opposite is a sick man who has hardly room to lie down.

... For nuns’ quarters and monk’s cells ample space is allowed.

<sup>70</sup> [www.jaas.org/edocs/v1/n1/nestorianism.pdf](http://www.jaas.org/edocs/v1/n1/nestorianism.pdf) accessed 16.12.11.

<sup>71</sup> Johan Ferreira, ‘Did Christianity Reach China in the Han dynasty?’, [www.cels.alu.edu.au/HanChinaChristianity.pdf](http://www.cels.alu.edu.au/HanChinaChristianity.pdf) accessed 14.12.11. (Han dynasty 25-220 A.D.)

<sup>72</sup> Ferreira ‘Did Christianity Reach China in the Han dynasty?’ cited above.

<sup>73</sup> Hans Kung and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions* (New York, 1989), p. 234.

<sup>74</sup> Columba Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross* (London, 1957), p. 19.

<sup>75</sup> Kung and Ching, *Christianity*, p. 234

<sup>76</sup> Ruth Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), p. 222.

... I begin to fear that the whole world will become a vast convent.<sup>77</sup>

These fears, however, were not to materialise. Within twenty-five years of the poem being written, monasteries – Buddhist, Taoist, and Christian – were suppressed.<sup>78</sup>

The potential for evangelisation beyond the Mediterranean world should not be understated. Ethiopia was no less populated than Egypt,<sup>79</sup> and whilst the incursion of early Christian missionaries into India and China is impossible to precisely define, there would seem to be little doubt that once established in India, Christians – whether Nestorian, or claiming descent from Thomas Christians,<sup>80</sup> travelled to, and evangelised in, China. These regions clearly presented no less opportunity, whether measured in land mass or population, than the Roman Empire. It must be conceded that in the eastward passage of Christianity through India, and more especially China (as distinct from other geographical directions, such as northwards, to and beyond Ireland, or Southwards to Ethiopia) identification of any extent to which instrumentally accompanied music had a role in Christian worship remains speculative. ‘Reasonable inference’, however, would suggest that neither the culture of the travelling Christians, nor any influence absorbed from other belief systems encountered along the way, would make an exception of what is argued here as a norm – that the appeal of music, whether sung, played, or danced to, was utilised by missionaries, in the cause of engagement with potential converts.

### 3. Judaism and Christian worship.

*Temple and synagogue: the earliest Christians.*

<sup>77</sup> P Chu-i, ‘The Two Red Towers’ (c. 820 A.D.), Arthur Waley, *170 Chinese Poems* (London, 1939), pp. 135-6.

<sup>78</sup> Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Even within the past century, an eight-fold increase in population is common to both countries.

<sup>80</sup> That from the mid seventh century or earlier, Thomas Christian missionaries traveled from Mylapore to China is attested to in the records of Mylapore, is claimed in *Tercentenary* [of the diocese of Mylapore] (Madras, 1906), cited P.J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians* (Bombay, 1970), p. 78.

The first converts to Christian belief may have felt this conferred upon them a new Christ-orientated identity, but the extent to which this new identity was recognisable by others,<sup>81</sup> may have been slight. As Stephen G. Wilson comments:

For those Jewish Christians who followed a Jewish lifestyle and continued their association with the synagogue, the situation would have been ... [un]clear to an outside observer, since often the only thing that distinguished them from their fellow Jews was their Christological beliefs.<sup>82</sup>

Seen from within the synagogue, however, that ‘continued association’ was clearly not without its tensions – even to the extent of the application of the synagogal punishment of flogging, were ‘Christian’ missionary zeal detected.<sup>83</sup> For those who, ‘... fearing the Pharisees, confined their faith in Jesus to a low profile, in order not to be excluded from the synagogue’, keeping quiet about their belief in Christ would seem to offer a solution.<sup>84</sup> Certainly tensions worsened, and towards the end of the first century Jews were ejecting from the synagogues ‘Christians’ who worshiped with them.<sup>85</sup> Indeed as early as 49 A.D., the emperor Claudius, in expelling Jews from Rome, was, in the opinion of some historians, reacting to disturbances between Jews who were Christianized, and others who were not.<sup>86</sup> What portions of Christ-believers participating in the activities of the synagogue were ethnically Jewish as distinct from the *sebomenoi* (non-Jewish participants in Jewish worship), is questionable. These *sebomenoi*, as pagan sympathizers of Jewish monotheism can be assessed as responsive conversion material (certainly Paul found them so) attracted to Christianity by the prospect of ‘a full share in salvation without circumcision’.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> It is suggested later in this chapter that being identified by others as a distinct group can stimulate a bond of kinship linking Christ’s followers.

<sup>82</sup> Stephen G. Wilson, *Leaving the Fold: Apostates and Defectors in Antiquity* (Minneapolis, 2004), p. 70.

<sup>83</sup> Matthew 10: 17; 23: 34.

<sup>84</sup> Ekkehard W. Stegemann and Wolfgang Stegemann, *The Jesus Movement: a Social History of its First Century* (Edinburgh, 1999 [German ed. 1995]), p. 237.

<sup>85</sup> John Bowden, *A Chronology of World Christianity* (London, 2007), p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> James D. Newsome, *Greeks, Romans, Jews: Currents of Culture and Belief in the New Testament World* (Philadelphia, 1992), p. 267. The expulsion is detailed in Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* xvi – ‘since the Jews constantly made disturbances at the instigation of Christus, he expelled them from Rome’.

<sup>87</sup> Peter Lampe, *Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries: From Paul to Valentinus* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. 69.

Available space within this study precludes all but the briefest discussion of what is sometimes referred to as the ‘parting of the ways’. What is outlined simply aims to assist in establishing the backdrop against which the subject of this study – evaluating any music and dance elements in early Christian worship – can be pursued. In any event:

...the separation of Christianity from rabbinic Judaism cannot nearly be identified as taking place at a particular point in time and place, as though there was only one ‘parting of the ways’. The separation from each other of what are now two quite independent religions was much more of a process, and took much longer to become clear-cut and final’.<sup>88</sup>

Any ‘parting of the ways’ does not inevitably signal the end of Jewish influence on Christian practices. During the centuries examined here, and within the ongoing diversity of reaction of those who heard the message of Christ proclaimed, it may be doubted whether any parting of the ways ever became ‘clear-cut and final’.<sup>89</sup>

If, within such a brief sketch of ‘Judaism and Christian worship’ as this introductory chapter can attempt, the canons of Councils are investigated for informative comment, those of Elvira in 306 A.D. and Laodicea in 363 A.D. would seem fruitful. Many of the canons, e.g. 16, 26, 49, 50, and 78 of Elvira, indicate that at a popular level, Christian attendance at Jewish services, intermarriage with Jews, eating with Jews (indulged in by clerics as well as laymen, who ‘shall be kept from communion as a way of correction’<sup>90</sup>), and other forms of social contact were commonplace enough to attract censure. Canons 29, 36, 37, and 38 of Laodicea cover similar ground, but c. 16 stating that ‘The Gospels are to be read on the Sabbath, with other Scripture’<sup>91</sup> may indicate, as maintained by James Carleton Paget:

... an association between Jews and Christians at the level of popular

<sup>88</sup> James D.G. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways* (London, 1991), xi (Hence the plural (*Partings*)) title of his monograph).

<sup>89</sup> For a wider exploration see A. Becker and A.Y. Read (eds.), *The Ways that never Parted* (Tubingen, 2003). A comprehensive review of recent scholarship is given in James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians* (Tubingen, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> Council of Elvira, 306 A.D., c. 50. [CUA.EDU: Council of Elvira](http://CUA.EDU: Council of Elvira) accessed 12.4.12.

<sup>91</sup> Council of Laodicea, 363 A.D., c. 16. [www.newadvent.org>Fathers](http://www.newadvent.org/Fathers) of the Church accessed 12.4.12.

piety which does not necessarily imply conversion. This type of ‘popular’ association with Judaism must have been far more widely prevalent than the evidence would in fact suggest precisely because it is association at a popular level, where absolute distinctions between Judaism and Christianity were likely to be less clear.<sup>92</sup>

Categorisation of worshippers, for vast swathes of ‘ordinary’ people of Antiquity/Late Antiquity, does not necessarily fit so snugly into groupings designated Jews, Christians, and pagans. This may have been the aspiration of their leaders, as is indicated in their writings, ‘wishing to create a state of separation, which did not exist on the ground where conceptions of religious identity were much more complex’.<sup>93</sup>

*Early Christian music: Jewish influence and heritage.*

Music within the context of individual or group identity was no less significant to Jewish culture than to the pagan cultures which surrounded it. Jews, as much as pagans, were moved by the sound of the aulos, urged to dance by the beat of the drum, and preferred their singing to be accompanied by the harp or lyre:-

Praise his name with dancing:

Play drums and harps in praise of him.<sup>94</sup>

If a more comprehensive array of musical instruments is desired:

Praise him with the sound of the trumpet.

Praise him with the psaltery and harp.

Praise him with the timbrel and dance:

Praise him with stringed instruments and organs.

Praise him upon the loud cymbals:

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<sup>92</sup> James Carleton Paget, *Jews, Christians and Jewish Christians in Antiquity* (Tubingen, 2010), p. 58.

<sup>93</sup> Paget, *Jews, Christians*, p. 416.

<sup>94</sup> Psalm 149: 3.

Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals.<sup>95</sup>

From I Chronicles we learn that as ‘they brought out the Covenant Box and put it on a new cart ... David and all the people danced before God with all their might, singing to the accompaniment of lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, trumpets.’<sup>96</sup> In II Chronicles we read of those ‘stationed to the east of the altar, robed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps and lyres ... they lifted up their voice with trumpets, cymbals and [other] musical instruments’.<sup>97</sup> From such passages Ragheb Moftah concludes, ‘it is clear that the musical art in worship had already reached a high degree of perfection’.<sup>98</sup> Within the context of practical music and Jewish learning, Philo cites the example set by Moses, who:

...speedily learnt arithmetic and geometry, and the whole science of rhythm, harmony and metre, and the whole of music by means of musical instruments.<sup>99</sup>

It can be argued that the practice of psalmody by early Christians owes its origins to domestic Jewish worship as much as, pre 70 A.D., to worship in the Temple. In a devout Jewish household it was customary for the father to sing psalms to his children<sup>100</sup> as normal religious practice in the context of family life.<sup>101</sup> On the influence of the Temple on earliest Christian worship Alfred Sendrey writes:

The music of the Temple, at least in its vocal aspect constituted an important element in their [the Christians] sacred service ... [the] singing of psalms, hymns, spiritual songs and responses, with or without instrumental accompaniment, was considered by early Christian congregations an indispensable form of worship, just

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<sup>95</sup> Psalm 150: 2-5.

<sup>96</sup> I Chronicles 13:7-8.

<sup>97</sup> II Chronicles 5: 12-14.

<sup>98</sup> Moftah, ‘Coptic Music’, p. 158.

<sup>99</sup> Philo, *Life of Moses* 1: 5, *WPC*, p. 461.

<sup>100</sup> As a late second century example cited by Jerome (*Epistle* 39: 22), the young Origen (b. 185 A.D.) was taught to recite the Psalms by his mother.

<sup>101</sup> J.A.Smith, ‘The Ancient Synagogue, the Early Church and Singing’, *Music and Letters* 65 (1984), p. 10.

as it used to be in the service of the Temple.<sup>102</sup>

As F.E. Warren reminded his readers of a hundred years ago, those ‘who founded the first Christian Churches were ... Jews, and frequented the temple services, certainly at first, and probably as long as the Temple stood’.<sup>103</sup> Whether, during the first (pre 70 A.D.) decades of Christ-believers any convert Levites with developed musical skills, benefited Christian gatherings, whilst being a possibility, remains conjectural. It is discussed later in this study in relation to the scholarly disagreement which attaches to synagogal use of psalms – and consequently the extent of synagogal influence on the earliest Christian music.

Whilst post 70 A.D. synagogues assumed some elements of worship previously the domain of the Temple, Calvin R. Stapert argues that ‘as a regular, fixed, and distinctively musical part of the activities in the synagogue, psalmody seems to have been a late comer’.<sup>104</sup> The domestic singing of psalms in the first decades of Christian worship, and the likelihood of their use at some wider Christian gatherings,<sup>105</sup> later became what McKinnon describes as ‘an unprecedented wave of enthusiasm for the singing of psalms... [which] swept from east to west through the Christian population in the closing decades of the fourth century’.<sup>106</sup> This, McKinnon contends, is in stark contrast to the synagogue, where, as one ‘ponders the abundant evidence ... the silence on psalmody appears increasingly significant. It is a silence of some five hundred years extending from the New Testament period to the time [eighth century] of the final redaction of the Talmud’.<sup>107</sup> Similar opinion is proffered by Sigmund

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<sup>102</sup> Alfred Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York, 1969), p. 64.

<sup>103</sup> F.E. Warren, *The Liturgy of the Ante-Nicene Church* (London, 1912), p. 188.

<sup>104</sup> Calvin R. Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, 2007), p. 155.

<sup>105</sup> Argument questioning, or refuting the use of music in early Christian worship is often centred on Justin Martyr (d. 165 A.D.) whose writings abound with reference to the Psalms, but his description of an early Christian Sunday Eucharist, makes no mention of psalms or any form of music, in what is a clear and sequential account of the proceedings. See Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, 87.

<sup>106</sup> McKinnon, ‘Desert Monasticism and the Later Fourth Century Psalmody Movement’, *Music and Letters* 75 (Oxford, 1994), p. 506.

<sup>107</sup> McKinnon, ‘On the Question of Psalmody in the Ancient Synagogue’, *Early Music History* 7 (Cambridge, 1987), p. 183.



Mowinckel, who writes, ‘the synagogue service was in ancient times always songless ... not until mediaeval times did synagogal poetry and singing come into existence.’<sup>108</sup>

McKinnon’s comment on the significance of silence regarding psalmody in the synagogue may be what Christopher Page has in mind when he writes that the lack of reference to synagogue music in the Mishnah, redacted around 200 A.D. ‘has impelled some to construe its silence as significant’. Page, however, contends that ‘the silence may mean little’, maintaining that ‘an office of psalmist probably did exist in some synagogues’ at the time the Mishnah was compiled, citing, amongst other evidence an early third century Jewish epitaph commemorating ‘Gaianos, secretary, psalm singer, lover of the Law; may he sleep in peace’.<sup>109</sup> Alfred Sendrey addresses the possibility of any prohibition of music in the synagogue. He maintains that, not unlike the ‘ordinary’ Christians referred to throughout this study who were somewhat ‘deaf’ to any prohibitions of music by ecclesiastical authority, prohibition was effective ‘only where the spiritual leaders of the dispersed people retained their full sway ... singing, however, as practiced in the Synagogue, never was seriously threatened by rabbinic prohibitions’.<sup>110</sup>

#### *Diaspora Judaism and Christian identity.*

Whilst Christian history is soon dominated by the emergence of Gentile conversion, within any discussion of the Jewish legacy to early centuries of Christian evolution, encounter with dispersed communities of Jewish people should not be lost sight of. Those furthest dispersed might be confronted by the Christian message at a later time than others. Later interaction with dispersed Judaism can be argued as a significant contributor to Christian practice in particular geographical regions and periods of history, and is highly significant to any depiction of Christian worship which, in attempting comprehensiveness, looks beyond centrally located Jewish/Christian communities. One such area, briefly touched on earlier in this chapter (and further discussed in chapter three) where a continuing Jewish influence can be traced as a

<sup>108</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (Grand Rapids, 1962), p. 4.

<sup>109</sup> Page, *The Christian West*, pp. 42-3.

<sup>110</sup> Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, p. 63.

vital factor in the lived experience of a Christian Church, is that of Ethiopia, and what Ullendorff describes as a 'syncretistic Judaeo-Christian civilization and folklaw'.<sup>111</sup>

It would appear likely that following the introduction of Christianity to Ethiopia in the fourth century, the policy of the ruler Ezana was to steer a midway course between proponents of the new religion and traditionalists.<sup>112</sup> This included Jewish/Judaized elements of the population well established before the third century A.D.<sup>113</sup> Ezana's policy would seem (so it is contended by some scholars) to have drawn 'local and immigrant Jews into the Church ... [who] were almost certainly the primary carriers of the Hebraic elements in Ethiopian Christianity ... as Jewish influences in Ethiopia during the first centuries of the Common Era were not so much supplanted by Christianity as absorbed into it'.<sup>114</sup>

As an example perhaps unique in Christian history, the practice of circumcision as an obligation to be fulfilled precisely on the eighth day from birth, otherwise common only to Jews, is observed by the Monophysite Ethiopian Church.<sup>115</sup> Other practices arguably reflecting Jewish origin, but integral to Ethiopian Christian worship, include veneration of the *tabot* (altar slab, seen symbolically as the Ark of the Covenant) to the accompaniment of singing, dancing, beating of prayer-sticks, rattling of sistra and playing of other musical instruments. Monophysite Ethiopians seem also to have observed the Jewish Sabbath in addition to Sunday – this practice continuing until at least the fifteenth century.<sup>116</sup> At this time<sup>117</sup> the issue of observing the Jewish

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<sup>111</sup> Edward Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians: An Introduction to Country and People* (Oxford, 1960), p. 103.

<sup>112</sup> Steven Kaplan, *The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia from Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1992), p. 34.

<sup>113</sup> Tudor Parfitt, *The Thirteenth Gate: Travels Among the Lost Tribes of Israel* (London, 1987), p. 122. Parfitt writes, 'It can be presumed that this migration [of Jews from Arabia, contends Parfitt] took place before the third century A.D. when the Jewish Oral Law was codified, because there are no elements in the Falasha religion which reflect any awareness of rabbinic Judaism'.

<sup>114</sup> Kaplan, *Beta Israel*, pp. 35 and 157,

<sup>115</sup> As Ullendorff brings to our attention, Muslims, some Coptic Christians, and tribes whose initiation rites include circumcision select a much older age for the procedure. That in recent times some Ethiopians are circumcised between the age of eight and ten years, by a pagan *Fuga* (a somewhat servile and isolated class who perform tasks requested of them) is stated in Wolf Leslau's account of life in the Gurage speaking region of Ethiopia (southwest of Addis Ababa) in 1946-7. See Wolf Leslau, *Ethiopic Documents* (New York, 1950), pp. 36-8.

<sup>116</sup> Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 105.

<sup>117</sup> Mention of this later period is made only in the context of illustrating, by their continuance, the existence of earlier practices.

Sabbath<sup>118</sup> saw such intensification of hostility<sup>119</sup> between Christian factions that monks heavily committed to Judaic traditions merged with the Beta Israel<sup>120</sup> in what could only be described as a Christian absorption into an ancient form of Judaism.<sup>121</sup> This was doubtless facilitated by ‘the combination of a common biblical ethos and a long history of contact and mutual acculturation between the two societies [which] had resulted in their possessing religious systems and cultural identities that were remarkably similar’.<sup>122</sup> Also surviving from the early establishment of Judaism in Ethiopia (which some scholars date from as early as the seventh century B.C.), and unique to the Jews(?) of Ethiopia,<sup>123</sup> ‘the most syncretist observance’,<sup>124</sup> is the Seged, an annual mountain top penitential ritual, for centuries shared with Christians, at which priests sing and congregants blow small metal horns.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Dispute concerning observation of the Jewish Sabbath was not of course unique to Ethiopia. Origen, for example, complained that members of his congregation attended the synagogue on Saturdays, and his church on Sundays (*Homilies on Leviticus*, 5:8).

<sup>119</sup> Such hostility was more frequent a century later, when, during the period of the ‘Roman missions’ (1550-1632), attempts were made by Rome to bring Monophysite Ethiopian Christians into doctrinal conformity. The period of ‘Roman missions’ was foreshadowed in 1490 by the arrival in Ethiopia of Portuguese adventurers. See Appleyard, *Eastern Churches*, pp. 64-68.

<sup>120</sup> Beta Israel – ‘House of Israel’ – a group which may, historically, have significantly contributed to the retention of Jewish practices in Ethiopian Christianity. The faith of the Beta Israel clustered around the *Orit*, the Old Testament written in Ge’ez, the language of both Jewish and Christian sacred writings. The terms ‘Beta-Israel’ and ‘Falasha’ are not used uniformly by writers. In some instances the terms are treated as synonymous, whilst in others ‘Falasha’ (found only in writing of the fourteenth century and later) is used to denote a group of Beta-Israel who, strictly adhering to Judaism, reject the beliefs of their Christian neighbours. Yet other writers reserve the term ‘Falasha’ to Jews who converted to Christianity. Such converts may also be referred to as *felasmugra*, though this term is usually applied only to those who converted to Christianity in the nineteenth century or after. Only in its relevance to discussion of Jewish influence on early Ethiopian Christian worship, is the subject of such terminology within the remit of this study.

<sup>121</sup> Some five hundred years later, many of the Beta Israel, in total some fifty-five thousand – see Steven Kaplan, ‘Can the Ethiopian change his skin? The Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews), and racial discourse’, *African Affairs* (The Journal of the Royal African Society), 98.393 (1999), p. 535) – were airlifted to the newly founded State of Israel under the ‘Law of Return’, amid some controversy as to whether their Jewish identity was compromised by centuries which saw such cultural and religious similarities between them and their Ethiopian neighbours. In 1973 the Israeli Government recognised the Beta Israel as the Lost Tribe of Dan, which, choosing to go into exile prior the Assyrian conquest, disappeared from history around 2700 years ago. As yet very little DNA research has been done to establish the origins of the Beta Israel, but the limited programmes so far undertaken suggest that the Jewish practices of the Beta Israel are likely to have been the result of conversion through contact with Jews living in Yemen, or by the Jewish community in southern Egypt at Elephantine, than by genetic linkage with the Lost Tribe of Dan. As intimated below, DNA research on the Lemba, and Bene Israel (of India) appear to be more supportive of claims to Jewish ancestry.

<sup>122</sup> Kaplan, *Beta Israel*, p. 110. It would go beyond the remit of this study to examine later Christian influences on the Falasha: these are discussed by Kaplan in *Beta Israel*, especially pp. 1-13 and 53-78.

<sup>123</sup> Salamon, *The Hyena People*, p. 132.

<sup>124</sup> K.K. Shelemay, *Music, Ritual and Falasha History* (East Lansing, Michigan, 1989), p. 56.

<sup>125</sup> Shelemay, *Falasha History*, p. 50.

The further passage of Christianity through central and southern Africa would also seem to be associated with the earlier travels and settlement of people of possible Jewish decent. The Lemba may at some point have split from the Ethiopian Jews (Beta Israel) and migrated to what is now Zimbabwe and South Africa. The circumstantial evidence of a Jewish past is there – circumcision, food laws, observing the Shabbat. Even today, as Tudor Parfitt and Yulia Egorova write:

the religious life of the Lemba is highly syncretistic ... those Lemba who perceive themselves as ethnically 'Jewish' find no contradiction in regularly attending a Christian church. Indeed by and large the Lemba who are most stridently 'Jewish' are often those with the closest Christian attachments.<sup>126</sup>

As noted above, many of the locations of Christian communities discussed earlier in this chapter (under the sub-heading 'Evangelisation'), are duplicated and pre-dated by the presence of Jewish communities. As Andre Chouraqui writes, 'Jewish communities formed an unbroken chain from India to the limits of Africa'.<sup>127</sup> Along these beaten paths of commercial activity there is evidence of a Christian presence from the second century, and in some instances, e.g. Kerala (south India) possibly from the first century.<sup>128</sup>

That Jewish culture, practice, and influence were substantial elements in the religious devotion of those Christian communities would seem beyond reasonable doubt. Avigdor Shachan describes the Christian settlements:-

in Taxila, Malabar and other Israelite communities in central Asia and along the eastern and western coasts of India [as] 'Israelite Christianity', an offshoot of the Jewish religion, for the language, culture, ritual and spirit that prevailed in this ancient church until the western missionaries arrived was a hybrid of

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<sup>126</sup> Tudor Parfitt and Yulia Egorova, *Genetics, Mass Media and Identity: A case study of the genetic research on the Lemba and Bene Israel* (New York, 2006), p. 53.

<sup>127</sup> Andre Chouraqui, *Between East and West: A History of the Jews of North Africa* (New York, 1973), p. 12.

<sup>128</sup> England, *Christianity in Asia*, p. 59.

Aramaic-Syrian-Eretz Israel and Eastern.<sup>129</sup>

An example of the importance (and presumed acceptance) of musical instruments is demonstrated in the context of the Knanaya. These Christian Jews arrived in Kerala in 345 A.D.,<sup>130</sup> allegedly to satisfy the bishop of Jerusalem at that time. His desire was to reinvigorate a struggling community which (to the extent that the endeavours of the earliest missionaries were in part directed towards dispersed Jewish communities<sup>131</sup>) may have been established as early as the first century.<sup>132</sup> In a grant of land and privileges (at that time and place recorded on copper plates), accorded them by the king, the Jewish Christians were given permission to ride elephants, wear sandals, spread carpets on the ground, and use 'seven kinds of musical instruments'.<sup>133</sup> Evidence concerning the musical activities of the Jews of southern India, Christian or not, is scant. To whatever extent scholarly opinion is correct in regarding these communities as preservers of practice rather than innovators, such descriptive material as is found in later writers might not unreasonably be thought to pertain, at least in some measure, to earlier times. Vincent le Blanc, for example, travelling through southern India in the late sixteenth century, wrote of Jewish women who 'sing certain songs like King David's psalms ... mingling instrumental music with their vocal'.<sup>134</sup> Another musical practice, the origins of which intermingle with traditions concerning early Thomas Christians, is the paraliturgical *kirtan*,<sup>135</sup> in which the singer (*kirtanker*) sings a biblical story accompanied by choir and/or musical instruments.<sup>136</sup> This seems common to non-Christian and Christian Jews<sup>137</sup> (though in the context of what is argued earlier in this chapter, any distinction between Christian and non-Christian Jew may have been complex rather than clear).

<sup>129</sup> Avigdor Shachan, *In the Footsteps of the Lost Ten Tribes* (New York, 2007), p. 54.

<sup>130</sup> The new arrivals possibly attempting escape from the Dyophysites in Jerusalem who pursued them (Monophysites) 'with all the violence of Christological football hooligans'. See Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (London, 2011), p. 189.

<sup>131</sup> Benjamin J. Israel, *The Bene Israel of India: Some Studies* (Bombay, 1984), p. 9.

<sup>132</sup> Mathew, *Indian Churches*, pp. 17-22.

<sup>133</sup> Neill, *Christianity in India*, p. 388. He writes (in 1984) that a number of such copper plates 'are still in existence and are in the possession of the Christians and Jews of Kerala. See Neill, *Christianity in India*, p. 45.

<sup>134</sup> Vincent le Blanc, cited Moses Ezekiel, *History and Culture of the Bene Israel in India* (Bombay, 1948), p. 3.

<sup>135</sup> Similarities with Syriac Christian practices are noted in chapter two.

<sup>136</sup> Ezekiel Barber, *The Bene Israel of India: Images and Reality* (Washington, 1981), p. 75.

<sup>137</sup> Barber, *Bene Israel*, p. 76.

Such practices seem to have survived. The Knanaya Christians today (so named, tradition has it, after Thomas of Cana, who, as indicated above, brought Jewish Christians to Kerala in 345 A.D.) maintain a strong oral tradition in the form of folk-songs – *purathana patitukal* – which proclaim and preserve the history of Christianity in Kerala. Likewise, dance-drama – *margamkali* – stages re-enactment of Gospel events.<sup>138</sup> Church processions may be accompanied by percussion instruments – *chenda* – or a group of instruments – *panchavadhyam* – somewhat reminiscent of the ‘seven instruments’ described in the grant of privileges, 345 A.D., referred to above. In practices not unlike those described earlier in this chapter, close relatives belonging to different religious faiths would participate in each other’s important festivals.<sup>139</sup>

Asahel Grant, an American medical doctor working with Nestorians<sup>140</sup> in Armenia during 1839-40 and a strong advocate of the Jewish ancestry of many Nestorians, describes the survival of Jewish practices as witnessed by him:

... the observance, by the Nestorian Christians, of the peculiar rites and customs of the Jews, furnishes very strong evidence of their Hebrew origin ... while they acknowledge Christ as the *final* [author’s italics] offering for sin, they continue to present the other form of sacrifice – the peace-offering in accordance with the customs of the Jews ... [an animal is] usually slain before the door of the church, when a little of the blood is often put upon the door lintels ... swine’s flesh and other meats prohibited by the Levitical code, are regarded by many Nestorians with little less abhorrence than there were by the Jews.<sup>141</sup>

Be that as it may, as far distant as Canton, co-existing communities of Jews and Christians are recorded less than half a century beyond the time-span of this study –

<sup>138</sup> B. Francis Kulirani, ‘Knanaya Christians’ in K.S. Singh (ed.), *People of India: Kerala* (New Delhi, 2002) XXVII, pp. 623-4.

<sup>139</sup> B. Francis Kulirani, ‘Kuravan Sidhanar Christians’, K.S. Singh (ed.), *The People of India: Kerala* (New Delhi, 2002) XXVII, p. 710.

<sup>140</sup> The theology of different forms of Christianity whose missionaries frequently vied over dominance, is, beyond occasional comment, not regarded as within the remit of this study.

<sup>141</sup> Grant, *The Nestorians*, p. 219.

though in due course both were massacred in the siege of Canton (878 A.D.). It is not of course suggested that there is anything unique in Jewish and Christian communities existing/mingling side by side – that is evident from much historical writing. What is perhaps less evident – and therefore in need of a raised profile – is the influence, in terms of religious practice, these communities exchanged, and the extent to which Christians continued to be influenced by (indeed entwined with) Judaism – and its rich heritage of music and dance. Any broad based depiction of early Christian worship should assess the ongoing influences of Judaism in its full geographical context, including substantially populated, though not necessarily centrally located regions of Christendom – and without the construction of any cut-off point associated with either the destruction of the Temple, or ‘parting of the ways’.

#### **4. Christian identity and pagan practice.**

##### *Social interaction.*

Jewish Christianization, of course, forms only a segment of any overall picture encompassing early Christian worship, and the role of music and dance. Christian identity was forged in the heat of a multi-cultural melting pot in which daily living subjected religious differences to the seductions of tolerant coexistence. The question was, as Robert Markus asks, ‘How much of the old life could be carried over into the new?’<sup>142</sup> How much of the pagan practices which surrounded them could be regarded as permissible in the everyday life of the Christian? To what extent were pagan neighbours aware of differences which separated them? As Peter Parsons puts it, ‘how far pagan neighbours could identify them as a coherent sect’.<sup>143</sup>

Christians had to find legitimate ways of being obedient to the Christian authorities, whilst, at the same time functioning with non-Christians in the interaction of everyday life. It was not unknown, for example, for Christians to frequent similar forms of entertainment as did their pagan friends and neighbours. Nor was it unknown for the

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<sup>142</sup> Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 32.

<sup>143</sup> Peter Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish: Greek Papyri Beneath the Egyptian Sand Reveal a Long-Lost World* (London, 2007), p.201.

Fathers (for example Chrysostom) to rebuke them for it. Whether Christians likely to visit the theatre, sing, dance or attend a banquet were seen as deficient in Christian commitment might hinge on the opinion of the observer, or, in hindsight, of the later commentator. Ruth Webb writes, ‘These ordinary Christians need not necessarily be considered as semi-Christian ... but as Christians who had different ideas about where to draw the boundary between the acceptable and the unacceptable’.<sup>144</sup> Such Christians might feel it not inappropriate to bring song, dance, or the banquet, to their worship – much as their pagan friends did, or as they themselves had done before conversion. As Peter Lampe writes:

Pagans and Christians not only coexisted door to door within one and the same tenement building, but also within the same family dwelling. They even got along together in friendship. Many Christians may have a pagan friend, a pagan brother, even a pagan child, an unbelieving husband, or a pagan wife.<sup>145</sup>

Ramsay MacMullen is a touch more pragmatic:

... together the two populations somehow met, married, and raised their children in whatever beliefs seemed most natural and profitable. They were bound to do so, so long as the pagan population had any bulk to it, and the church could not successfully screen off its faithful from contaminating contacts. This long remained the case.<sup>146</sup>

Amongst pagan celebrations ‘carried over’ (to borrow Markus’ phrase) an example might be seen in the Christian Oxyrhynchites who continued the practice of their pagan predecessors in celebrating the Festival of the Nile – indeed an amulet book of the sixth century A.D., recovered at Oxyrhynchus contains an invocation of the Nile,

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<sup>144</sup> Ruth Webb, *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008), p. 200.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. 103.

<sup>146</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (Yale, 1997), pp. 6-7.



‘King of rivers, Nile, rich in rains ...’ alongside the creed and Psalm 132 ‘Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity’.<sup>147</sup>

Not of course that brethren always dwelt in unity. Whilst tolerant coexistence was not uncommon amongst the masses, it was not necessarily characteristic of the Christian bishop. The churches of Rome, in 366 A.D. were littered with corpses following heated disagreement between rival candidates for the papacy,<sup>148</sup> and as MacMullen brings to our attention, the close of the fourth century, saw a greater number of deaths of Christians at the hands of other Christians than had died in all the pre 312 A.D. persecutions.<sup>149</sup> An example might be seen in Cyril of Alexandria, not only in the intrigues surrounding the Council of Ephesus (referred to elsewhere in this chapter), but, in 415 A.D. the violent murder of the prominent female pagan philosopher, Hypatia, who, having become the focus of Cyril’s resentment was abducted from the street and brutally murdered in his church, exposing him to accusations of complicity in the act perpetrated by his henchmen.<sup>150</sup> By the fifth century what Alan Kreier refers to as ‘the grand edifice built on coercive Christianity was emerging.’<sup>151</sup> Cyril of Alexandria may be seen as indicating this when applying ‘swords into ploughshares’ texts such as Isaiah 2 and Micah 4 not to the Church, as earlier writers such as Irenaeus and Origen had done, but to the Empire, whose swords had beaten those of its enemies into ploughshares – ‘many people were ... conquered by Roman weapons and so converted’.<sup>152</sup> Just one year beyond the cut off point of this study, the Council of Toledo, in 681 A.D. decreed the beheading of those guilty of non-Christian practices.<sup>153</sup> Paganism, however, proved quite resilient, despite moves against it. History provides plentiful examples of the most effective organic fertiliser of all forms of religious belief – the blood of its martyrs.

<sup>147</sup> Parsons, *City of the Sharp-Nosed Fish*, p. 207.

<sup>148</sup> Ammianus, *Res Gestae* 27: 3. See Ammianus Marcellinus, *The Later Roman Empire (A.D. 354-378)* tr. Walter Hamilton (London, 1986), pp. 335-6.

<sup>149</sup> MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 14.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>151</sup> Alan Kreider, *Worship and Evangelism in Pre-Christendom* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 45.

<sup>152</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on Isaiah 2: 4*, tr. Robert Charles Hill (Massachusetts, 2008), p. 66.

<sup>153</sup> Council of Toledo, 681 A.D., canon 11, MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 16.

But as the objectives of high authority did not necessarily filter down to those swathes of the population disposed to live and let live, some brief examination of aspects of both pagan and Christian religious practices may be beneficial in identifying whether the well documented use of music in the former<sup>154</sup> is replicated in the latter. A fairly high profile example of Christians being as likely as any one else to express their religious identity by means of music, dance, and feasting, may be seen in ceremony/activity associated with the graveside. Graveside assembly at martyrs shrines (though not, of course, any immodest dance, or instrumental music which such celebrations might include) was highly praised by Gregory of Nyssa:

For our instruction there remained the memory of the struggles of the  
Martyrs, uniting the peoples, cherishing the Church ... praying to God  
for what is good for us. Thus he creates here ... a wonderful meeting place  
and real day of celebration.<sup>155</sup>

Clearly it was not unknown for the excitement on such occasions to resemble the pagan, and must therefore be condemned:

... the greatest sensuality is paid homage to in the holy place: old and young  
anoint their heads and paint their eyes when they go to the martyr's church  
... there is the noise of cymbals and flute.<sup>156</sup>

The engaging of wailing women provokes chastisement from Chrysostom:

[if] someone should hire these mourning women – believe my words,  
for I speak as I think, and whoever wants to get angry may do so – I  
will cast him out of the Church as an idolater.<sup>157</sup>

More acceptably, Christian joy, distinct from lamentation emerges from an inscription found in the Roman basilica of St Agnese Fuori le Mura:

No sorrowful tears, no beating of the breast.

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<sup>154</sup> Instances are cited throughout this dissertation.

<sup>155</sup> Backman, *Religious Dance*, p. 41.

<sup>156</sup> Egyptian monk Shenute, c. 400 A.D., *MW*, p. 175.

<sup>157</sup> Chrysostom, *In hebraeus* IV, 5, *MW*, p. 166.

... I possess the Kingdom of Heaven.  
 ... a safe repose has taken me. I dance ring dances with the blessed saints  
 in the beautiful fields of the righteous.<sup>158</sup>

But the extent to which Christian graveside ceremony/celebration ‘graduated’ from the sentiments of its pagan past, in the face of such discernable similarity, seems problematic. As Kreider writes, ‘despite the complaints of the preachers ... by the fifth century church leadership in most places seem to have assumed that the narratives and folkways of converts would largely continue unchanged’.<sup>159</sup>

*Pagan and Christian acts of worship.*

Ramsay MacMullen, in his focused study, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400*,<sup>160</sup> poses the question, ‘Where should one expect to see the Christians? At ordinary services inside the city? Or instead, at commemorative services with or without picnics in the suburbs?’<sup>161</sup> The contribution of archaeology in attempting an answer would seem to demonstrate the importance of the latter. Liliane Ennabli’s study of the churches of Carthage from the fourth to seventh centuries, identified only one church structure within the city walls. It could accommodate around three hundred worshipers in a city whose total population (albeit not all Christian) was in the region of two hundred thousand.<sup>162</sup> Outside the city walls, there existed a number of churches, including the cemetery-basilica dedicated to Cyprian, which alone could accommodate around a thousand people, and at which Augustine preached on a number of occasions. Commemoration of the martyrdom of Cyprian is referred to by Augustine:

there’s a mensa [tomb-top table with carved indentations to secure  
 food/drink receptacles] of Cyprian constructed just there ... not because  
 Cyprian ever ate there, but because he was sacrificed there and because by  
 that sacrifice he prepared this mensa – not so that he might give or receive

<sup>158</sup> Backman, *Religious Dances*, p. 41.

<sup>159</sup> Kreider, *Worship and Evangelism*, p. 42.

<sup>160</sup> Ramsay MacMullen, *The Second Church: Popular Christianity A.D. 200-400* (Atlanta, 2009).

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>162</sup> Liliane Ennabli, *Carthage. Une métropole chrétienne du IV<sup>e</sup> à la fin du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1997), MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 63.

food there but that upon that table sacrifice might be offered to God, to whom he himself had been offered ... he was encircled there by persecutors, now, where it is venerated by his friends in prayer.<sup>163</sup>

As discussed later in this study, commemoration of the dead, be they martyrs, or just mourned family deceased, was demonstrably important in early Christian worship. That traditions of the masses were tolerated is clear from Augustine, who:

... explained by what necessity this bad custom seemed to have arisen in the church ... when peace came after so many and such violent persecutions, crowds of pagans wishing to become Christians were prevented from doing this because of their habit of celebrating the feast days of their idols with banquets and carousing; and, since it was not easy for them to abstain from these ancient but dangerous pleasures, our ancestors thought it would be good to make concession for the time being to their weakness and permit them, instead of the feasts they had renounced, to celebrate other feasts in honour of the holy martyrs, not with the same sacrilege but with the same elaborateness.<sup>164</sup>

Commemoration of the dead provides copious description of such pagan/Christianized/Christian elaborateness. Funerary or cemetery churches, by their size and number, clearly indicate the popularity of memorial rites for the dead. An image of what MacMullen describes as ‘picnics in the suburbs’ can be constructed from archaeological evidence at Tipasa, a north African coastal city of around twenty thousand, ‘spectacularly Christian at the turn of the fifth century’.<sup>165</sup> In the suburbs of the city, adjoining a cemetery, is the late fourth/early fifth century ‘Chapel of Alexander’, built to memorialize the most holy of the Tipasa dead – the city’s bishops – which in turn saw other burials attracted to the location of this funerary church. The earliest memorial chambers were dedicated to martyrs. Each had a dining-table in mensa form, resting on, and identifying those interred below. A well to serve the

<sup>163</sup> Augustine, *Sermon* 310: 2: 2, MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 109, *PL* XXXVIII, 1414

<sup>164</sup> Augustine, *Epistle* 29: 9, MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 63, *PL* XXXIII, 119.

<sup>165</sup> MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 55.

mensa was located in a corner of the martyr-shrine, to cool and dilute wine. One of the earliest inscriptions reads, '[Here is] the mensa of Januarius the martyr. Drink up, Live long!'.<sup>166</sup>

But not only were the living to share the wine. Libation tubes in north African graveyards seem to be a common feature.<sup>167</sup> In the basilica at Timgad (around three hundred miles south-east of Tipasa), a sarcophagus with wine strainer in a cup carved into the lid, dispenses wine in the proximity of the deceased's mouth. As MacMullen comments, 'The dead were after all only asleep, they could in their sleep still sense what was offered to them ... in return their favour might be hoped for'.<sup>168</sup> In Tipasa alone, some fifty mensae have been located.<sup>169</sup> Such commemoration/ celebration – albeit not without abuses and excesses raising the ire of the Fathers – suggests much regarding the use of music and dance in early Christian commemorative worship. The extent of such commemorative celebration is demonstrable in the reaction of the Council of Hippo in 393 A.D. which decreed against clerics dining inside churches, and four years later the Council of Carthage decreed 'that no bishop or clergy should have parties in churches, and, so far as is possible, the people also should be barred from such parties'.<sup>170</sup> The injunctions seem to have largely fallen on deaf ears. Augustine, preaching in Carthage some eight years later, refers to the resistance of the masses to attempted suppression of 'the pestilential rowdiness of dancers'.<sup>171</sup>

Such assembles, however, seem not to have been deaf to music – sung, played, and danced to; much pagan and Christian ritual surrounding death being not dramatically dissimilar. Quasten comments that 'great as was the significance of music in the

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> On mensae in other locations, e.g. Italy and Greece, see MacMullen, *Second Church*, pp. 73, 83, 125, and 127. In Ethiopia, beer rather than wine seems to have been used in similar practices recorded in the late 1940s. Wolf Leslau writes, 'The pagans pour every year *sakar*-beer upon the grave intending it for the future life'. Leslau, *Ethiopic Documents*, p. 49.

<sup>168</sup> Within such a context, the Council of Elvira, in the early fourth century, forbade the use of candles at graveside ceremonies lest they wake the dead. E.J. Jonkers, *Acta et symbola conciliorum quae saeculo quarto habita sunt* (Leiden, 1954), MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 160.

<sup>169</sup> MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 60.

<sup>170</sup> Council of Carthage (397 A.D.), canon 42, MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 161.

<sup>171</sup> Augustine, *Sermon 311* tr. Edmund Hill, *The Works of Saint Augustine. A Translation for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Essential Sermons* (New York, 2007), p. 371. This largely echoes the earlier fourth century Council of Laodicea (? 363 A.D.), canons 53 and 54, which cover similar issues. See *NPNF* 14, pp. 156-7.

pagan cult of the gods, still greater was the role it played in the cult of the dead'.<sup>172</sup> This is well evidenced in pagan visual art associated with the cult of the dead, depicting various instruments plucked, blown, shaken, or hit, in the cause of music and dance – aulos, horn, cithara, sistrum, tambourine, for example. In Rome, the 'Law of the Twelve Tables' limited the number of aulos players in a funeral procession to ten.<sup>173</sup> That continuity concerning music and dance can be seen in the wider context of practices 'carried over' is evident in regard to the provision of nourishment – for the living and the dead. Lucian comments on pagan mourners, who, at the grave, 'seem to pour out wine and a mixture of honey into the hole' though also noting that some 'funeral guests keep the wine and meal for themselves'<sup>174</sup> in practices not dissimilar from those ascribed to Christians.

The intensity of such gatherings may be seen in the description Gregory of Nyssa gives concerning the funeral rites of his sister, Macrina, 'when the hymnic vigil in her honour was completed after the manner of martyrs celebrations, the crowd of men and women who had come together ... broke in on the psalmody with their loud wailing'.<sup>175</sup> Such wailing was objected to by many of the Fathers, who, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, saw such acute lamentation as contrary to Christian belief in the resurrection. Chrysostom writes:

... in the future no one should mourn and lament any longer and bring the saving work of Christ into discredit ... death has become sleep. Why to you wail and weep? It is ridiculous when the pagans do it. But when even a believing Christian is not ashamed of such conduct, what excuse does he have?<sup>176</sup>

Such admonishments, however, seem to have been less than totally successful, especially with regard to female Christians playing musical instruments, the *Commandments of the Fathers, Superiors and Masters* (c. 576 A.D.) stating that:

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<sup>172</sup> *MW*, p. 149.

<sup>173</sup> Cicero, *De legibus* 2.23.59, *MW*, p.152.

<sup>174</sup> Lucian, *Charon* 22.519 and *De mercede conductis* 28.687, *MW*, pp 153 and 154.

<sup>175</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Macrina*, tr. Kevin Corrigan (Eugene, 2005), p. 50. *PG* 46, 992

<sup>176</sup> Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum homilia* 31: 3, *MW*, p. 162. *PG* 57, 374.

It has come before our assembly that some men who are confounded by death ... are like the pagans and others who do not acknowledge the resurrection of the dead .. Women especially pull out their hair, rip their clothing, lacerate their cheeks, make music with castanets, drums and flutes.. Now the synod commands that those who have met with an occasion of sorrow should remain in churches or monasteries or in their houses ... Whoever does otherwise the entire synods puts under ban and forbids to enter the church.<sup>177</sup>

That this remained an unresolved issue is demonstrated as late as the mid thirteenth century, when the same disobedience seems to exist:

Women who dance in pagan fashion for their dead and go to the grave with drums, dancing the while, shall be admonished not to do that. But if they do not discontinue they shall be forbidden entrance to the church.<sup>178</sup>

## **5. The heavenly Kingdom: a shared Christian concept.**

If, in the context of diverse Christian practices, the question raised at the outset of this chapter – ‘what bound Christians together?’ – produces answers as likely to illustrate dissension as cohesion, to those topics – baptism, shared meal, singing of psalms, and evangelisation, – a fifth subject commends itself for inclusion in discussion. Whilst the subjects listed above may be seen as fundamental ingredients of Christian life on earth, earthly life itself is seen as but a prelude to the eternal. This transitory state, offering so much scope for fired-up dissension, may be argued as offering less opportunity for ‘bonding’ than the Christian’s belief in the heaven which is its goal. From such a standpoint it could be postulated that what ‘bound Christians together’ was, above all, the common aspiration of admittance<sup>179</sup> to God’s heavenly Kingdom. For those identifying themselves/being identified by others as followers of Christ, the difference between Christians and the rest of mankind is that ‘their days are passed on

<sup>177</sup> *MW*, p. 163, citing Riedel, *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen*, p. 191.

<sup>178</sup> Barhebraeus, *Nomocanon*, *MW*, p. 177.

<sup>179</sup> Which is not to argue that the conditions of admittance were without dispute between Christians, or description and number of heavens through which some progression might be made.

the earth, but their citizenship is above in the heavens ... Christians inhabit the world, but they are not part of the world'.<sup>180</sup> As Paul's Letter to the Philippians states, 'we, however, are citizens of heaven'.<sup>181</sup> The question might well be raised, does this shared Christian concept of heaven encompass any heavenly music and dance? From early Christian writing does any picture emerge of heaven resounding with voices, instruments, and dance in praise of God?

*Description and depiction.*

There would seem to be no shortage of documentation to answer in the affirmative. The way is paved in pre-Christian writing. Apocalypses, for example, written during the two centuries before the birth of Christ, as W.O.E. Oesterley comments, 'look away [author's italics] from this world in their visions of the future ... the Apolacypsticists centred their hope upon a world to come'.<sup>182</sup> Visitation to such a place, including exposure to celestial music making is vividly described in The Book of the Secrets of Enoch:

In the midst of the heavens I saw armed soldiers, serving the Lord, with tympana and organs, with sweet voice, with sweet and incessant voice, and various singing, which it is impossible to describe, and which astonishes every mind, so wonderful and marvellous is the singing of these angels, and I was delighted listening to it.<sup>183</sup>

In similar vein, an abundance of material is provided by the Fathers of the Church. Gregory Nazianzus (c. 329 – 389 A.D.) writes, 'The angel choirs sing praise to God with psalms'.<sup>184</sup> Theodoret (c. 390 – 455 A.D.) is clear on the subject, describing the

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<sup>180</sup> *The Epistle of Diognetus* [c. 120 – 200 A.D.] 5 and 6 ('Characteristics of the Christian Community'), tr. Maxwell Staniforth, *The Apostolic Fathers: Early Christian Writing* (London, 1968), p. 145.

<sup>181</sup> Philippians 3:20.

<sup>182</sup> W.O.E. Oesterley, Introduction, *The Book of Enoch*, tr. R.H. Charles (London, 1917), xiii and ix.

<sup>183</sup> The Book of the Secrets of Enoch, 17: 1 cited Grubb, *Angels*, pp. 93-4. The origins of this text, also referred to as 2 Enoch, or 'Slavonic Enoch' (distinguishing it from I Enoch, known as 'Ethiopic Enoch') remain a little obscure, but it is believed to be a compilation of texts written in Greek, or in some cases Hebrew, by a number of authors, dating 100-200 B.C. However, R.H. Charles, editor of the first English translation (1896), dates the work at around 1-50 A.D. The earliest versions extant of I Enoch and II Enoch are written in Ethiopic and Slavonic languages respectively.

<sup>184</sup> Gregory Nazianzus, *Carmina* 2.1.1.180, Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London, 2007), p. 222. PG 37, 991.



occupation of the angels as ‘dancing in heaven and hymnody of their creator’.<sup>185</sup> Dancing, albeit in more symbolic language, is described by Pseudo-Dionysius (Dionysius the Areopagite), writing c. 500 A.D. and building his *Celestial Hierarchy* on ‘what it was that the sacred theologians<sup>[186]</sup> contemplated of the angelic sights and what they shared with us about it’.<sup>187</sup> He writes of ‘nine explanatory designations for the heavenly beings’<sup>188</sup> of whom the ‘lower ranks ... received from their superiors whatever understanding they have of the operations of God’,<sup>189</sup> whilst the ‘first rank of heavenly beings ... circles around in immediate proximity to God ... ceaselessly it dances around an eternal knowledge of him’.<sup>190</sup> The eternal, of course, is incompatible with any notion of fatigue, John of Damascus (c. 657 – 759 A.D.) tells us, ‘there is but one task to perform, to sing as do the angels, without ceasing or intermission’.<sup>191</sup>

To whatever extent the imagery of an Edenic paradise has a heavenly resonance, Ephraem the Syrian (c. 306 – 373 A.D.) describes a scene where, in a ‘region of blessedness and joy ... light and merriment’:

There is a congregation of harpers,  
A society of players of the lute,  
The sound of Hosannahs,  
A Church of Hallelujahs.<sup>192</sup>

Ephraem’s *Hymn to the Resurrection* assures the virtuous a welcome arrival:

When they come to the gate of Paradise,

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<sup>185</sup> Theodoret, *Graecarum Affectionum Curatio* III, G.R.S. Mead, *The Sacred Dance in Christendom* (London, 1926), p. 54.

<sup>186</sup> The designation ‘theologians’ in this instance referring to ‘Old Testament’ writers who provide information concerning angels, e.g. Ezekiel, Isaiah, Zechariah.

<sup>187</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Celestial Hierarchy* 6: 1, tr. Colm Luibheid, *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works* (New York, 1987), p. 160.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 6: 2, p. 160.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 7: 3, p. 164.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 7: 4, p. 165.

<sup>191</sup> John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* xi, tr. S.D.F. Salmond, *NPNF* 9, p. 29. Whilst born within the time-span of prime concern to this study, John of Damascus (657-759 A.D.) lived beyond it.

<sup>192</sup> Ephraem, metrical homily *Description of Paradise*, tr. Henry Burgess, *Select Metrical Hymns and Homilies of Ephraem Syrus* (London, 1853), p. 114.

Of its own accord it shall open to them,  
 The guarding cherub shall salute them worshipfully,  
 Playing his harp and coming to meet them.<sup>193</sup>

Copious amounts of material illustrating a heaven filled with music and dance, firmly establish these activities as integral to expectations concerning the afterlife. Prudentius (c. 348 – 410 A.D.) writes:

Let the heights of heaven sing, all you angels, sing,  
 Let all the powers everywhere sing in praise of God,  
 Let no tongue be silent, let every voice ring in harmony.  
  
 Him alone may my Muse sing of,  
 Him alone may my lyre praise.<sup>194</sup>

Plucked instruments are clearly in evidence, when, in The Revelation of John, a voice from heaven is heard, sounding ‘like harpists playing harp music on their harps’.<sup>195</sup> We are then told of those standing on the glass sea ‘with God’s harps’<sup>196</sup> who sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. Prominence is given to blown as well as plucked instruments by the seven angels who play ‘trumpets’<sup>197</sup>.

Angels being pure spirit,<sup>198</sup> ‘it is not as they really are that they reveal themselves ... but in a changed form which the beholders are capable of seeing’.<sup>199</sup> Any practical problems concerning angelic musical performance, under circumstances lacking the usual (earthly) components of time, physical mechanism, and the possibility of vibrating air are addressed by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150 – 215 A.D.):

Nor would anyone attribute to the angels ... lips ... and the parts

<sup>193</sup> Ephraem, *Hymn of the Resurrection*, tr. Burgess, *Select Metrical Hymns*, p. 31.

<sup>194</sup> Prudentius, *Cathemerinon* 9, 22-24 and 2, tr. Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London, 2000), p. 83.

<sup>195</sup> Revelation 14:1-5. tr. Nicholas King.

<sup>196</sup> Revelation 15:1-8.

<sup>197</sup> Revelation 8:2.

<sup>198</sup> Hebrews 1:14.

<sup>199</sup> John of Damascus, *Exposition* 9, p. 19.

contiguous, throat, and windpipe and chest, breath and air to vibrate.

[The sound] reaches the soul's consciousness by ineffable power  
and without sensible hearing.<sup>200</sup>

John of Damascus tells us that 'without uttering words they [angels] communicate to each other their own thoughts and councils'.<sup>201</sup> Imagery of heaven, whether expressed in the writings of the Fathers, or (particularly later) in works of visual art, struggles with the concept of any practical mechanics which may be operative in the heavenly Kingdom, where the physical norms of earthly life seem inapplicable. That said, however, choice of instruments depicted as being played by angels, is influenced not only by the association of those instruments with worldly/unworldly activities (for example the harp is preferred to the aulos), but, keeping the imagery within some notion of scientific bounds, the portability of instruments in angelic use. Trumpets, small drums harps and lyres, contribute to imagery<sup>202</sup> such as that described above, where the advancing cherub, playing a harp of manageable size avoids any notion of physical exhaustion incompatible with concepts of heaven. In whatever ways the imagery approaches gravity and aerodynamics there would seem to be little doubt that the early Christian concept of heaven is not lacking musical activity in praise of God. Clearly perceptions of heavenly angelic life impacted significantly on the earthly life of early Christians. Descriptions of voice, instrument, and dance extolling angelic devotion to God would stretch to the point of incredulity any assumption<sup>203</sup> that earthly Christian worship was without the least echo of the abundant celestial music associated with heavenly citizenship.

Awareness of the proximity of angels could be both expressed and strengthened through visual images. Insofar as angels are commonly associated with the harp in visual works of art, the earliest depictions of that instrument pre-date Christianity by at least three millennia. Some thousand years later, the earliest known example of an Israelite musician playing a harp/lyre is the Semitic lyrist depicted in a fresco from the

<sup>200</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata* 6: 7, and 7: 7, *ANF* 2, pp. 493 and 533.

<sup>201</sup> John of Damascus, *Exposition* 9, p. 19.

<sup>202</sup> Use of a wider range of instruments played by angels in visual art – e.g. small drum, small hydraulis – post-date the time span of concern to this study.

<sup>203</sup> Discussed in later chapters of this study.

tomb of Knum-Hetep, Beni-Hasan, XIIth dynasty, c. 1900 B.C.<sup>204</sup> That depictions in art kept the vision of angels increasingly in mind during the period of concern to this study is brought to our attention, when, during the heat of the iconoclastic controversy,<sup>205</sup> the Second Council of Nicaea, in 787 A.D., looking back, reaffirmed what it described as ‘ancient pious custom’. The Council states:

That the honourable angels and saints ... [portrayed] in paintings and mosaic and in other fit materials should be set forth in the holy churches of God, and on the sacred vessels and on the vestments and on hangings and on pictures both in houses and by the wayside.<sup>206</sup>

It is of course impossible to know the extent to which early examples of imagery in visual art were destroyed during the period of iconoclastic controversy. An early surviving example, a fresco of the archangel Gabriel, in the catacomb of Priscilla, dates from around the late second/early third century, but whilst there are examples in pre-Christian art, of winged ‘angels’ – i.e. ‘messengers’ whose wings are the means of propulsion between worlds,<sup>207</sup> in a Christian context, the first representations of angels with wings do not occur before the late fourth century.

To the extent that Orpheus<sup>208</sup> is portrayed as Christ in paintings and on sarcophagus reliefs of the third/fourth century A.D., located in the catacombs, such depictions of Christ/Orpheus playing the harp/lyre, pre-date by some centuries the imagery of angelic harpers encountered in texts. The Christian context of their location, however, does nothing to diminish our awareness of the presence of music in early Christian concepts of the afterlife. Early Christians adopted pagan mythological subjects,

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<sup>204</sup> Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp: Its History, Technique and Repertoire* (London, 1969), p. 8.

<sup>205</sup> Discussion of the iconoclastic controversy lies beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>206</sup> Margaret R. Miles, *The Word Made Flesh: A History of Christian Thought* (Oxford, 2010), p. 122. For the wealthy, imagery went further, Asterius of Amasia (in present day Turkey), c. 400 A.D. complaining of the luxury in Christian life, writing ‘the more religious among rich men and women, having picked out the story of the Gospels, have handed it over to the weavers ... in doing this they consider themselves to be religious and to be wearing clothes that are agreeable to God’, Asterius of Amasia, *Homily I*, tr. Cyril Mango, *The Art of the Byzantine Empire 312-1453: Sources and Documents* (Englewood Cliffs, 1972), p. 51.

<sup>207</sup> Two examples can be seen in the Louvre – *Winged Spirit*, a mural from Pompeii, dating from the third quarter of the first century B.C.; *The Winged Victory of Samothrace*, marble and limestone, dating from around 190 B.C. See Nancy Grubb, *Angels in Art* (New York, 1995), pp. 8 and 9.

<sup>208</sup> The subject of Orpheus is briefly discussed in chapter three..

grafting them onto Biblical themes where sufficient parallel seemed apparent. Such parallels could be argued for the Orpheus/Christ paintings in the catacombs. The figure is usually depicted playing the lyre/harp<sup>209</sup> – a reference to Christ through descent from David; sheep and goats (which mythologically were tamed by the music of Orpheus) recall Christ the Good Shepherd; pastoral landscape evokes themes both of Christian and Classical paradise. As discussed in chapter three of this study, the figure of Orpheus had, by at least two centuries before the birth of Christ, become ‘ambivalent: capable of bearing more than one meaning, and hence suggesting different things to different people ... in this new guise the figure of Orpheus was a welcome one to Christian apologists’.<sup>210</sup> Expressing the imagery so abundant in the early Christian world, Orazio Marucchi writes:

Just as the Orpheus of paganism had overcome the savage beasts by the music of his lyre, so the Divine Orpheus, Jesus Christ, had transformed the pagan world by the sweetness of His doctrine.<sup>211</sup>

Respect for the wisdom of Orpheus is indicated by, amongst others, Tatian, who writes, ‘Orpheus, again, taught you poetry and song, from him, too, you learned the mysteries’.<sup>212</sup> Visual ‘popular’ art, however, in seeming to go further, perhaps indicates distinctions between ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ Christians which reflect the level of Christian conversion, education and position in society, and social interaction of their lives. Whilst Robert A. Skeris writes that ‘care must be taken to avoid constructing an unjustified chasm between theology and popular piety, between early Christian art and the writings of the Fathers’, he also posits questions:

If it is justified to speak of Roman ‘popular’ or ‘plebeian’ art in the late antique period, it may not be unjustified to go a step further, and inquire as to the ‘popular’ Christianity of the day. What did the average Christian of, say, the second or third century believe, think about, and live in the

<sup>209</sup> But in some instances the instrument is the *syrinx polykalmos*, or ‘panpipes’, and in other examples music activity is not depicted. See Pierre du Bourguet, *Early Christian Paintings* (New York, 1965), pp. 1-50 and plates.

<sup>210</sup> Robert A. Skeris, *Chroma Theou: On the Origins and Theological Interpretation of the Musical Imagery used by the ecclesiastical writers of the first three centuries, with special reference to the image of Orpheus* (Altötting, 1976), p.154.

<sup>211</sup> Orazio Marucchi, *Manual of Christian Archaeology* (London, 1935), p. 274.

<sup>212</sup> Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, I, tr. J.E. Ryland, *ANF* 2, p. 65.

way of Christianity? How did the average Christian teacher teach it?<sup>213</sup>

Such questions, of course, not restricted to concepts concerning the musicality of any ‘world to come’, but broadened to ascertaining what sounds might be associated with ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ influences on the music of early Christian worship in ‘this world’, form an important element of this dissertation. Whilst the subject of visual art and the music of early Christian worship is returned to in chapter three of this study, in the context of the present chapter, examining certain aspects of Christian identity, mention might be made of the religious beliefs of those producing early Christian art. Following the cessation of persecution, the demand for Christian visual art, in offering substantial commercial opportunity, may mean it is unwise to assume all early Christian art to be the handiwork of fully committed Christians. Even from the earlier times of persecution it may not be unthinkable that art described by Thomas F. Mathews as executed ‘at first in obscurity in graveyards by journeyman artists’<sup>214</sup> was the work of those about whom Justin Martyr writes:

... how the artists manage the subject matter of their gods, how they hack and hew it, and cast it and hammer it, and not seldom from vessels of dishonour; by changing their figure only, and giving them another turn by the help of art, out comes a worshipful set of things you call gods. This we look upon not only as the highest flight of human folly, but as the most injurious affront to the true God.<sup>215</sup>

Returning, however, to depictions of angels playing musical instruments, in contrast to the abundance of angelic harpists found in early Christian texts, in Christian visual art, so far as the evidence of surviving examples can guide us, angels playing instruments seem not to appear until more than a century beyond the period discussed

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<sup>213</sup> Skeris, *Chroma Theou*, p. 155.

<sup>214</sup> Thomas F. Mathews, *The Clash of the Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art* (Princeton, 1995), p. 11.

<sup>215</sup> Justin Martyr, *The First Apology*, ix, tr. William Reeves, in John Kaye, *The First Apology of Justin Martyr, addressed to the Emperor Antoninus Pius* (London, 1822).

in this study.<sup>216</sup> The volume of such artistic enterprise increases throughout the centuries.<sup>217</sup>

*In union with the angels.*

The relationship of heavenly and earthly life – of angelic and human worship – including the high profile of music and dance, is revealed in much early Christian writing. Clement of Alexandria, illustrating a counterpart between Christian initiation and heaven, tells us that on the ‘mountain beloved of God ... [you will] dance in a ring, together with the angels, around Him who is without beginning or end, the only true God, and God’s Word is part of our song’.<sup>218</sup> The concept of two dimensions of simultaneous worship – human and angelic – is described by Gregory Thaumaturgus (c. 233 – 270 A.D.) writing that ‘the Kingdom above hastens to call the heavenly minded to join the divine liturgy of the incorporeal choirs’.<sup>219</sup> That (at least in the Orthodox Churches) such a concept persists in the thinking of Christians today, is indicated in the (semi-)recent writing of Timothy (Kallistos) Ware, who, in 1963 states:

The Holy Liturgy is something that embraces two worlds at once  
... [the faithful] are taken up into the ‘heavenly places’ ... not merely  
the local congregation are present ... the celestial powers are present  
with us.<sup>220</sup>

The reality of angelic presence can be seen in directives given in the sixth century *Regula Magistri*, insisting that should an officiating priest need to spit, he should aim to one side, to avoid angels standing at the altar.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>216</sup> A parchment dating from the late ninth century, housed in Mainz *Wissenschaftliche Stadtbibliothek* shows a winged angel playing an elongated ‘trumpet’. This parchment is claimed to be a direct copy of a production in Trier, dating some half-century earlier.

<sup>217</sup> The fifteenth century seeing a profusion of paintings by prominent artists e.g. Botticelli, Donatello, Fra Angelico, Lippi, da Vinci, Perugino.

<sup>218</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Heather*, 12, ANF 2, p. 205, PG VIII: 213.

<sup>219</sup> Gregory Thaumaturgus, *Homily I*, tr. S.D.F. Salmond, *The Works of Gregory Thaumaturgus* (Edinburgh, 1871), pp. 118-9.

<sup>220</sup> Timothy Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London, 1982 [1963]), p. 270.

<sup>221</sup> *Regula Magistri*, cited Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (California, 1982), p. 319, PL 88, 1009.

A glimpse of such reality, where angel influence was courted and felt, is expressed by John Anthony McGuckin:

The Orthodox Church looks to the angels to give it a clearer picture of its own identity as church of the next age, for it is only there that it will be rendered luminous and transfigured in the complete fulfilment of the praise of God.<sup>222</sup>

In the mid fourth century, Basil promotes the singing of hymns and songs in honour of the Creator, nothing being more blessed ‘than to imitate the chorus of angels here on earth’.<sup>223</sup> That ‘above, the hosts of angels sing praise; below, men form choirs in the churches and imitate them’ is stated by John Chrysostom.<sup>224</sup> Likewise, Pseudo-Chrysostom writes of men in the deserts, who, ‘crucified to this world hold converse with God’ and whose angelic vigils turn ‘earth into heaven ... making angels of men’.<sup>225</sup> Indeed holy men are transformed as angels – Onnophrius, for example, who, in the second half of the fourth century A.D., appears to Paphnuti (a follower of Anthony, who allegedly knew, ultimately buried, and wrote the *Life* of Onnophrius) ‘turned completely into fire and his appearance greatly frightened me’,<sup>226</sup> or Abba Silvanus, with ‘his face and body flashing like an angel’.<sup>227</sup>

### *Making angels of men.*

The concept of becoming ‘as an angel’, however, was not pioneered by the processes of early Christian thought. In 2 Enoch the story is told of Enoch ascending to the highest heaven and being transformed into ‘one of the glorious ones’.<sup>228</sup> Clearly

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<sup>222</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *The Orthodox Church: An Introduction to its History, Doctrine, and Spiritual Culture* (Oxford, 2011), p. 223.

<sup>223</sup> Basil, Letter II, 2, (to Gregory of Nazianzus), *MECL*, p. 68. *PG* XXXII, 225-8.

<sup>224</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilia I in Oziam seu de Seraphinis* 1, *MECL*, p. 89. *PG* LVI, 97.

<sup>225</sup> Pseudo-Chrysostom, *De poenitentia*, *MECL*, p. 90. *PG* LXIV, 12-13.

<sup>226</sup> Paphnuti, ‘Life of Onnophrius’ 17, tr. T.Vivian, *Histories of the Monks of Upper Egypt and Life of Onnophrius* (Kalamazoo, 1993), p. 156.

<sup>227</sup> *Apophthegmata patrum*: Silvanus 12, *PG* 65: 412, cited Frankfurter, ‘The Legacy’, p. 179.

<sup>228</sup> 2 Enoch 22: 4-10, Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London, 2007), p. 113.



observable, is the influence of Jewish traditions of heavenly liturgy on early Christian writing which attempts to describe music – sung, played, and danced to by heavenly beings – in the imagined spiritual world. A purely vocal example may be seen in the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, from the Qumranic literary sources (Dead Sea Scrolls), conceived as angelic songs in the worship of the heavenly Temple.<sup>229</sup> That harps and lyres are played by ‘an infinity of angels’ is referred to in a passage from *The Nature of the Rulers*.<sup>230</sup> The prophetic content of such writing reflects Jewish apocalyptic literature, where we meet ‘vivid descriptions of heavenly places and inhabitants ... [with] close attention to angelic liturgy as a practice to be imitated by righteous humans. [This presents] a consistent message that heaven is where the righteous belong’.<sup>231</sup>

Margaret Barker brings to our attention that Jewish ‘contemporaries of the first Christians believed that resurrection meant being taken up into the presence of God and becoming angels before their physical death’.<sup>232</sup> Barker cites Qumran texts, for example ‘may you be as an angel of the Presence’<sup>233</sup> and Philo’s Therapeutae, who no longer lived the life of this world, ‘Such is their longing for the deathless and blessed life that, thinking their mortal life already ended, they abandon their property to their sons, daughters, or kinsfolk’.<sup>234</sup> As Alan Segal observes, the ascetics of Qumran attempted ‘a permanent state of Temple purity, which they understood as tantamount to and anticipatory of full angelic existence’. Under such circumstances, Susan R. Garrett suggests the term ‘angelification’ whether or not the ascetic elite of Qumran:

... became angels or just that they became partners with angels. Either way, they appropriated the symbolism of the angelic world for themselves, a world in which they experienced transcendence of the normal limitations

<sup>229</sup> Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 129.

<sup>230</sup> Nag Hammadi codice, *The Nature of the Rulers* II: 4, cited Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 220.

<sup>231</sup> David Frankfurter, ‘The Legacy of Jewish Apocalypses in Early Christianity: Regional Trasectories’, in James C. VanderKam (ed.), *The Jewish Heritage in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1996), p. 135.

<sup>232</sup> Barker, *Temple Themes*, p. 113.

<sup>233</sup> The Blessings 1Q5b IV, Barker, *Temple Themes*, p. 113.

<sup>234</sup> Philo, *On the Contemplative life* 1: 13, *CWP*, p. 699.

that tie humans to earth and to mortal existence.<sup>235</sup>

The process of ‘making angels of men’, through ascetic practice, is frequently encountered in the writings of the Fathers. Withdrawal to some remote location, renunciation of possessions, food, sleep, and the least vestige of sexual fulfilment would seem to be the blueprint guiding such a process. Fasting, Cyril of Alexandria tells us ‘is the imitation of the angelic way of life’.<sup>236</sup> As angels do not eat, neither should those who strive to imitate them, hence, ‘if you subdue your belly, you will live in paradise, but if you do not subdue [it] you will not’.<sup>237</sup> As Pseudo-Athanasius writes, ‘fasting is the life of the angels, and the one who practices it has the rank of the angels’.<sup>238</sup>

Perhaps most highly prized is the practice of virginity. As Chrysostom writes, ‘Do you grasp the value of virginity? That it makes those who spend time on earth live like the angels dwelling in heaven?’ Certainly the virginal life foreshadowed resurrected life where ‘they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven’,<sup>239</sup> consequently ‘those who practice virginity are angelic’.<sup>240</sup> The goal of virgins and monks, that through their asceticism they are enabled to function ‘as angels’, or ‘at least to begin to know what it means to “live as angels”’,<sup>241</sup> clearly inspires the ascetic life. As Basil of Ancyra explains ‘... those who practice virginity are angels ... not some obscure angels, but exceedingly distinguished’.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Susan R. Garrett, *No Ordinary Angel: Celestial Spirits and Christian Claims about Jesus* (Yale, 2008), pp. 224-5.

<sup>236</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, ‘Festal Letter One’, tr. Philip R. Amidon, *Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 1-12* (Washington, 2009), p. 42.

<sup>237</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *De rerum 7*, Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1998), p. 176.

<sup>238</sup> Pseudo- Athanasius, *De virginitate*, Shaw, tr. David Brakke (Oxford, 1995), p. 274.

<sup>239</sup> Matthew 22: 30.

<sup>240</sup> Basil of Ancyra, *De virginitate*, 51 cited Shaw, *The Burden*, p. 185.

<sup>241</sup> Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 12.

<sup>242</sup> Basil of Ancyra, *De virginitate* 51, cited Shaw, *The Burden*, p. 185.

That through fasting and self-denial the ascetic body can be ‘controlled and transformed in this life into an angelic, incorruptible body in which lust no longer lives’<sup>243</sup> clearly charted the direction of much early Christian thought and practice. Examination of its magnitude and significance forms the content of chapter two of this study, including, essentially, the implications for the use of music and dance in Christian worship.

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<sup>243</sup> Shaw, *The Burden*, p. 98, citing the view of Basil of Ancyra.

## Chapter two, asceticism.

1. The moulding of attitudes: a) philosophy b) theology c) society d) the body e) exegesis. 2. Gender: the place of women in patristic attitudes. 3. Asceticism: its growth, and challenges to the ascetic ideal. 4. Asceticism and musical practice

The rise of asceticism, for reasons discussed later, was especially prevalent once Christianity had achieved official recognition within the Roman empire. This ascetic surge greatly influenced the attitudes and practices of Christians in terms of what could be legitimately experienced, and what must be avoided – in daily life inclusive of worship. Within the context of ascetically motivated attitudes and practices,<sup>1</sup> this chapter seeks to identify how the expansion of asceticism, with its emphasis on renunciation, self-denial, and abstinence, might influence the use of music and dance in Christian worship.

Present day concepts of ‘body, mind, and spirit’, within a holistic approach to the human person, foster a respect for, and attitude of kindness towards the body, as friend of mind and spirit. For the ascetic Fathers of the early Church, the concept was very different – the body was the enemy of the spirit, and battle must be done against it. A pertinent question for our study, therefore, in the context of asceticism, concerns whether music should be regarded as an ally of the body or of the spirit? If no comprehensive answer, encompassing all forms of music, was clear to all early Christians, discernment is necessary, concerning what musical activity may be fostered, and what must be rejected. The absence of such a common, unified answer, underpins issues raised in this chapter.

High on the list of issues examined are attitudes towards the human body, the physicality of which enables what is sung, played, or danced, whilst bodily sensuality might be perceived as a threat to the spirit, and a disruptor of ascetic life. Whilst a few exceptions are noted, in the main, asceticism promoted forms of sung psalmody

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<sup>1</sup> Likewise within the attitudes and practices of those who resisted what they saw as a rapidly encroaching tide of ‘unnatural’ ascetic excess.

within the context of a life of prayer. Music more generally, however, seems, in the writings of the Fathers, to be out of kilter with the concepts of Christian asceticism – not only being associated with pagan religious practice, but regarded as too close to the pleasures of the body, which have no place in a life focused on the spirit. Questions are raised concerning any difference of attitudes and practices within and between different Christian groups, but as stated elsewhere, qualification for inclusion is not restricted to those eventually confirmed as ‘orthodox’. Neither is it restricted to those whose Christian beliefs remain untainted by other concepts – Gnosticism, for example.

### **1. The moulding of attitudes.**

Christian asceticism, within the context of this study, is examined from the perspective of the philosophical and social dispositions and practices which, in the context of its adherents’ spirituality, contributed to the formation of a powerful means of absorption into the sacred. Practices renouncing sex, food, sleep, or other worldly fulfilments, were seen as conducive to a concept of Christian life, which, in common with the asceticism of other religions, saw the body as an inhibitor of progress towards salvation. As Valantasis writes, ‘The body contains desires that are to be destroyed; the body enjoys pleasures that must be quieted; the body has eyes and ears and other sense organs that must be oriented towards God alone’.<sup>2</sup> The extent to which Christian life was challenged to embrace asceticism, is not without relevance to discussion surrounding the extent to which Christian life accepted – or, having in mind the heritage of its pagan past, refused to relinquish – music and dance as devotional practices. As so often in this thesis, the discussion will inescapably return to the diverse spectrum of attitudes and practices within the intellectual, spiritual, ascetic elite, and the ‘ordinary’ masses, and to the differences of attitude and practice between ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ Christians.

Whilst music and dance have a versatility which can place their use anywhere between religious practice and lewd entertainment, along with other activities of

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<sup>2</sup> Richard Valantasis, *Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Cambridge, 2008), pp. 143-4.

mass, popular appeal (the theatre, for example, or horse racing), Christian leaders were suspicious of such leisure pursuits, if not outright condemnatory. It would be ‘neat’, were it accurate, to summarise more ascetic forms of Christianity as totally anti-music and dance, and the less ascetic as the wellspring of musical inspiration. But the reality is not so clear cut. Ascetic forms of Christianity were not comprehensively opposed to singing and dancing – as discussed elsewhere in this study. Extending beyond the focused time period engaged with (–680 A.D.), monastic chant reached a high peak of aesthetic beauty, and within the centuries reviewed, the singing of the psalms, hymns, and choreographed liturgical dance, officially commissioned, was not unknown. As explored in chapter three, the notion is not rejected that some ecclesiastical leaders, on some occasions, encouraged popular practices of music and dance. And a pattern of alternative expressions of Christian belief – often based on vigils in cemeteries – saw music and dance frequently sidestep the disapproval of Church authority.

#### *Attitudes to Musicians.*

Within any discussion of influences on the evolving asceticism of the early Church, the subject of musicians – who, in guises from cantor to chorus-girl, and emperor<sup>3</sup> to slave, surface regularly throughout this study – might be briefly touched on here, within the context of moulding of attitudes. Three areas would seem to attract special comment from the Fathers. Firstly, vocal and instrumental musicians had a substantial role in pagan religious ceremonies – thus, for the elite Christians who determined such things, negativity emerges concerning any similar usage in Christian worship. Secondly, music and dance as entertainment – at the theatre, and more especially as ‘after dinner entertainment’ – was smeared with ‘sex-trade’ association. This was hardly likely to endear performers to morally and ascetically minded Fathers. Thirdly, any counter-argument citing Old Testament examples of the use of music and dance in worship, was neutralised on the basis that this was only tolerated, not desired by God. For the Fathers, the value of musical instruments often lay in silencing them, by the separation of instrument from performer, allowing the instrument to become the

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<sup>3</sup> For example Nero, Vaspasian, and Hadrian performed either as vocalists or instrumentalists.

subject of allegoric treatment in their homilies and letters.<sup>4</sup> The sturdy threads of these negative attitudes run through the centuries of prime relevance to this study. More favourable comment is likely to be found in non-Christian philosophical sources. For example, the qualities attributed to the musician, and their necessary development in relation to the spiritual journey, were specifically described by Plotinus (205-270 A.D.):

The musician we may think of as being exceedingly quick to beauty, drawn in a very rapture to it: somewhat slow to stir of his own impulse, he answers at once to the outer stimulus: as the timid are sensitive to noise so he to tones and the beauty they convey; all that offends against unison or harmony in melodies and rhythms repels him; he longs for measure and shapely pattern.

This natural tendency must be made the starting-point to such a man ... he must be led to the Beauty that manifests itself through these forms; he must be shown that what ravished him was no other than the Harmony of the Intellectual world and the Beauty in that sphere, not some one shape or beauty but the All-beauty, the Absolute Beauty; and the truths of philosophy must be implanted in him to lead him to faith in that which, unknowing it, he possesses within himself.<sup>5</sup>

The question is begged as to what kind of musician, theoretical or practical,<sup>6</sup> Plotinus has in mind as a suitable candidate for ascetic development. For Boethius (c. 480 A.D.) there would seem to be no doubt, ‘that person is a musician, who, through careful rational contemplation, has gained the knowledge of making music, not through the slavery of labour, but through the sovereignty of reason’. Instrumentalists ‘devote their total effort to exhibiting their skill on instruments. Thus they act as

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<sup>4</sup> It may be noted in passing, that when, for example, in ascetic imagery, ‘the body can be called a cithara’ (Pseudo-Origen [? Evagrius], *Selecta in psalmos* 32, *MECL*, p. 66, *PG* XII, 1304), with the ‘tongue as the cymbal of the mouth ... sinews as strings’ (Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus* II: 4, *ANF* 2, p. 248, *PG* VIII: 441), a virginity-focused parallel may be thought discernible, between musical instruments removed from the context of practical activity, and the sexually inactive human body, of which, allegorically they become part.

<sup>5</sup> Plotinus, First Ennead, 3: 1, tr. Stephen MacKenna (tr.), *The Six Enneads* (Chicago, 1952), p.10.

<sup>6</sup> The division of music into *musica mundane*, *musica humana*, and *musica instrumentis constituta* is addressed in chapter three of this study.

slaves’<sup>7</sup>. Two centuries earlier, Sextus Empiricus is a little more comprehensive, clearly not excluding practical performers as ‘musicians’ when he writes, ‘we say that Aristoxenus [music theorist], the son of Spintharus, is a musician; [yet] according to another manner, it is the science concerned with the instrumental experience, as when we name those who use auloi and psalteries musicians, and female harpers musicians’.<sup>8</sup>

Sextus Empiricus describes musicians of such moral integrity, that heroes ‘if they were ever away from home and set out on a long voyage [would] ... leave behind musicians as the most faithful guardians and teachers of discretion to their wives’.<sup>9</sup> By the late fifth century, however, Boethius, in his condemnation of musicians, dancers, and actors working in the theatre, would seem to indicate the contamination to have spread to the society at large which patronises it, in a turn of phrase which pays little tribute to the effect on the moral climate of several centuries of (ascetic or not) Christianity:

Indeed today the human race is lascivious and effeminate, and thus it is entertained totally by the representational and the theatrical modes ... it has lost its mode of gravity and virtue, and having almost fallen into a state of disgrace, it preserves almost nothing of its ancient splendour.<sup>10</sup>

The prevailing attitudes to music, in classical, pagan culture and philosophy, are relevant to chapter three of this study, and are further addressed there. But continuing a brief outline here, as an attempt to locate such attitudes within the context of asceticism and its impact on musically expressed religiosity, may be helpful. Of the importance of music, there can be no doubt, and training in it had long been an essential component of education. Plato wrote:

... we attach such supreme importance to a musical education because rhythm and harmony sink most deeply into the recesses of the soul, and take most

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<sup>7</sup> Calvin M. Bower, *Boethius’ ‘The Principles of Music’, an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, PhD dissertation, Peabody, 1966, pp. 102 and 103.

<sup>8</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Musicians*, tr. Denise Davidson Greaves (Nebraska, 1986), p. 121.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>10</sup> Boethius, *Principles*, p. 35



powerful hold of it, bringing gracefulness in their train, and making a man graceful if he be rightly nurtured.<sup>11</sup>

What follows immediately below, is a brief sketch of factors which contributed to ascetic thinking and practice, and whilst not necessarily addressing directly the subject of music and dance, nonetheless conditioned attitudes which, in the main, beyond modestly restrained sung psalmody, were highly critical of performed music and dance.

#### a) Philosophy

##### *Background.*

Earliest Christianity did not appear against a back-drop of blank canvas, but rather into a world of pre-existing philosophical and social attitudes, which jostled society in various ways, and with which early Christianity was challenged to interact. Whilst an appraisal of the origins of asceticism would be too enormous a project to be attempted within the remit of this study, some reference to the subject is made, if only to serve as a reminder that the practices of asceticism long pre-date the Church Fathers and were part of ancient society and culture, both within, outside, and before the emergence of the Church.

Pagan asceticism, which, in common with other philosophical systems, grappled with concepts concerning the relationship between body and spirit, self and other, time and eternity, had, in its own evolution, embraced renunciation and bodily austerity as aids to the development of virtue, and control of disordered tendencies. Plotinus had gone so far as to regard asceticism as the necessary preparation for the union of man with the divine, writing of ‘a life taking no pleasure in the things of the earth ... the self put out of mind in the contemplation of the Supreme’.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, tr. John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan (Ware, 1997), III: 40, pp. 90-91.

<sup>12</sup> Plotinus, *Ennead* 6, 10: 7-9, tr. McKenna (tr.), pp. 358-9.

Such writing impresses with its high-mindedness – indeed would not seem totally inappropriate if penned by one of the Fathers – and an inspiration, therefore, to Christian ascetics seeking to establish a distinctive identity by which the new religion could be recognized. Certainly Augustine held Platonism/Neo-Platonism in high regard, writing that they ‘do perhaps entertain such an idea of God as to admit that in Him are to be found the cause of existence, the ultimate reason for the understanding, and the end in reference to which the whole life is to be regulated’.<sup>13</sup> Augustine continues, ‘Plato defined the wise man as one who imitates, knows, loves this God, and who is rendered blessed through fellowship with Him in His own blessedness ... it is evident that none come nearer to us than the Platonists’.<sup>14</sup> Augustine goes so far as to glancingly touch creedal affirmation, when he writes of the Platonists ‘they have understood, from this unchangeableness and this simplicity, that all things must have been made by Him, and that He could Himself have been made by none’.<sup>15</sup> He continues, ‘And the light of our understandings, by which all things are learned by us, they [the Platonists] have affirmed to be that selfsame God by Whom all things were made’.<sup>16</sup>

### *Jewish influences*

It may also be kept in mind that asceticism was not unknown to the Jews. Philo wrote of the Therapeutae ‘they practice a liberal, gentlemanlike kind of frugality, hating the allure of pleasure with all their might’,<sup>17</sup> knowing that ‘wine is the medicine of folly, and costly seasonings and sauces excite desire, which is the most insatiable of all beasts’.<sup>18</sup> Going beyond the ‘gentlemanlike’ frugality of the Therapeutae, Philo writes of the Essenes, ‘They are above all men devoted to the service of God’,<sup>19</sup> they are ‘lovers of frugality’,<sup>20</sup> who:

...repudiate marriage; and at the same time they practice continence in an

<sup>13</sup> Augustine, *City of God against the Pagans*, tr. R.W. Dyson (Cambridge, 1998), VIII: 4, p. 317.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 5, p. 318. But Augustine condemns ‘admirers of Plato [who] dared calumniously to assert that our Lord Jesus Christ learnt all these sayings of His ... from the books of Plato’. Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, tr. J.F. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1892), II: 28, p. 65.

<sup>15</sup> Augustine, *City of God*, 8: 6, p. 321.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 8: 7, p. 323.

<sup>17</sup> Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, 9: 69, WPC, p. 704.

<sup>18</sup> Philo, *Contemplative Life*, 9: 73, WPC, p. 705.

<sup>19</sup> Philo, *Every Good Man is Free*, 75, WPC, p. 689.

<sup>20</sup> Philo, *Apology for the Jews*, 11: 12, WPC, p. 746.

eminent degree; for no one of the Essenes ever marries a wife, because woman is a selfish creature and one addicted to jealousy in an immoderate degree, and terribly calculated to agitate and overturn the natural inclinations of a man, and to mislead him by her continual tricks.<sup>21</sup>

Hardly surprising, then, that strong elements of ascetic renunciation, including a high regard for celibacy should find their way from Jewish, as well as pagan cultures, and, as discussed later in this chapter, influence the mould in which early Christianity was formed, and more especially, sweep through much of Christendom during the centuries examined here.

#### b) Theology.

The notion that Christianity (perhaps like any other belief system) flourishes best in times of persecution is not without relevance to a growth in asceticism which is entwined with a new form of martyrdom. Christianity, post-Constantine, lacking the bloody martyrdom of the past, found in ascetic practice a substitute, daily martyrdom in monastic life. Advance into the desert (whether a literal desert or not), could be seen as a response to the Old Testament command addressed to Abraham ‘Leave your country, your relatives, and your father’s home, and go to a land that I am going to show you’,<sup>22</sup> and reflected in the New Testament words of Matthew, requiring that one leave ‘houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields’.<sup>23</sup> In that spirit, Pachomius (290–346 A.D.) – often referred to as the founder of Christian monasticism<sup>24</sup> – exhorted his novices to seek the mercy of God, renounce the world, one’s relatives, and then oneself.<sup>25</sup>

As Jerome, quoting psalm 45, verses 10 and 11 writes:

“Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 11: 14, *WPC*, p. 746.

<sup>22</sup> Genesis 12: 1.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 19: 29.

<sup>24</sup> That Pachomius established at Tabennisi, on either side of the river, separate monasteries for men and women, who followed ‘the same way of life’, see C. Butler (ed.), *The Lausiac History of Palladius* (Cambridge, 1967 [1898]), p. 96.

<sup>25</sup> Rousseau, *Pachomius*, p. 124.

own people and thy father's house, and the king shall desire thy beauty"

In this forty fourth psalm [Vulgate numbering] God speaks to the human soul that, following the example of Abraham, it should go out from its own land and from its kindred ... but it is not enough for you to go out from your own land unless you forget your people and your father's house; unless you scorn the flesh and cling to the bridegroom in a close embrace ... He will lead you into His chamber with His royal hand; He will miraculously change your complexion so that it shall be said of you "Who is this that goeth up and hath been made white".<sup>26</sup>

This new martyrdom was later to be clearly categorized by the Irish, who, if the *Irish Litanies* are to be believed,<sup>27</sup> were visited by 'seven monks from Egypt'<sup>28</sup> possibly as early as the fifth century.<sup>29</sup> In this Irish categorization, three divisions of martyrdom are described, using the terms 'white', 'green', and 'red'. John Ryan writes:

White martyrdom consists in a man's abandoning everything he loves for God's sake ... Green martyrdom consists in this, that by means of fasting and labour he frees himself from his evil desires; or suffers toil in penance and repentance. Red martyrdom consists in the endurance of a Cross or death for Christ's sake.<sup>30</sup>

The Irish definitions reflect the concepts found in the writings of the Desert Fathers,<sup>31</sup> the 'colour coding' used by the Irish monks, perhaps being conceptually helpful. The 'green martyrdom' was essentially the same concept as Susanna Elm describes in *Virgins of God*:

<sup>26</sup> Jerome, Letter 22:1, tr. W.H. Fremantle, *NPNF* (2) 6, p. 22.

<sup>27</sup> Charles Plummer, *Irish Litanies* (London, 1925), pp. 54-75.

<sup>28</sup> Many connections are alleged concerning early Irish monasticism and the East, including the architecture of the 'beehive cells' as being influenced by early examples of ecclesiastical building in Egypt. See Nora K. Chadwick, *The Age of Saints in the Early Celtic Church* (London, 1955), p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> Whilst the earliest manuscript of the *Litany of Irish Saints II*, in which reference to the monks from Egypt is located is from the twelfth century, some of the events recorded in the litany can reasonably be dated from much earlier centuries. See Charles Plummer (ed.), *Irish Litanies: Text and Translation* (Woodbridge, 1992 [1925]), p. 65.

<sup>30</sup> John Ryan, *Irish Monasticism: Origins and Early Development* (London, 1931), p. 197.

<sup>31</sup> Gregory Telepneff, *The Egyptian Desert in the Irish Bogs* (Etna, California, 2001), pp. 28-49.

...asceticism is essentially a *discipline*. Based on distinct stoic-platonic notions, it is a systematic method to achieve self-control, a way to channel and counteract 'passions', which range from the appetitive passions for food and sexual pleasure to emotions such as anger, jealousy, avarice, and hubris.<sup>32</sup>

Quasten writes, 'For those who want to imitate Christ and cannot undergo true martyrdom, there remains the spiritual death of mortification and renunciation. Both martyr and ascetic have one and the same ideal, the perfection of Christ'.<sup>33</sup> A similar thought concerning martyrdom and asceticism is expressed by Eva Synex, 'What is at stake is not the idea that asceticism might be an alternative form of martyrdom or vice versa, but that martyrdom and asceticism are two forms of the same event: humanity's encounter with the divine'.<sup>34</sup>

### c) Society.

#### *Christian population and the numerical strength of ascetics.*

Whilst not all Christians were attracted to ascetic practice, during the late third and fourth centuries, asceticism became increasingly important as a factor in defining Christian identity. Indeed asceticism clearly became a total way of life for thousands of virgins and monks in the cities and the desert. Whilst the extent to which ascetic practice filtered down to the 'ordinary' Christian masses can only be speculated, arithmetical calculation suggests that highly committed ascetic virgins and monks amass a total strength of many thousands. As the *Life of Anthony* informs us, by 357 A.D. 'the desert was made a city by monks'.<sup>35</sup> Clearly the numbers were vast, whether living as hermits in the remote desert, or as urban monks. Five thousand, allegedly, lived within the walls of Oxyrhynchus, and a further five thousand lived beyond its walls. If however, it may be assumed these were committed to some level of ascetic life, the remaining Christian(ized) masses – arguably displaying varying degrees of

<sup>32</sup> Susanna Elm, *'Virgins of God': The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 1994), p. 13.

<sup>33</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology*, vol. II (Westminster, Maryland, 1984), p. 100.

<sup>34</sup> Eva Synex, 'Oriental Orthodox: Syriac Hagiography' in Ken Paddy (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Eastern Christianity* (Oxford, 2007), p. 442.

<sup>35</sup> Athanasius, *The Life of Anthony*. tr. Robert C. Gregg (Malwah, 1980), 14, p. 42.

religious/ascetic fervour – on the figures cited later in this chapter, must be counted in millions – possibly thirty million Christians within the Roman Empire by the midway point, c. 400 A.D. of the centuries discussed here. For such masses, worship infused with the music and dance of popular culture incurred the condemnation of the Fathers; many ‘ordinary’ Christians being more committed to disapproved of commemorations in cemeteries (with attendant music, dance, food and wine), than to officially sanctioned liturgical worship in churches.<sup>36</sup> Whilst such popular devotions might involve participation in music and dance not necessarily dissimilar from practices of their pagan neighbours, the (usually unaccompanied) chant of a more ascetic elite signalled the advent of liturgical singing, which flourished during the time period of prime concern to this study, especially in the fourth century. McKinnon writes of ‘that period of singular enthusiasm for psalmody’.<sup>37</sup>

It is argued that whilst a substantial proportion of the Roman empire’s Christian population (its leaders and those they influenced) were clearly infused with the desire to follow a strongly ascetic path, it is equally clear that substantial numbers were less ascetically inclined – even to the point of resisting what they saw as ascetic excess.<sup>38</sup> If the role of music in the lives of those committed to the ascetic path may be seen as confined to the sung praises of psalmody, the continued practices of music and dance in the lives of less ascetic Christians may be argued on grounds provided in the texts expressing condemnation and complaint.<sup>39</sup> Beyond the Roman empire (for example Ireland, and Ethiopia), not only were music and dance not condemned, but are observable as an accepted part of Christian life and liturgy. Towards the ‘ends of the earth’ as then known, it was not uncommon for Christian worship to include instrumental music and dance without incurring the wrath of ecclesiastical authority. The Irish, for example, in all strata of religious and lay society, seem to regard music and dance with a morally neutral normality, much as other ‘far flung’ Christian societies, such as Ethiopia,<sup>40</sup> whose music and dance practices suggest their own

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<sup>36</sup> See chapter one of this study, pp. 43-47.

<sup>37</sup> *MECL*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> Discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>39</sup> Cited throughout this study.

<sup>40</sup> The use of instrumental music, both by Celtic missionaries, and Ethiopian priests is discussed in chapter three.

cultural continuity to be less burdened by any distant outpourings of condemnation – most by a Greco-Roman elite.

Bart D. Ehrman suggests that by the 330s A.D., Christians may have accounted for some five percent (amounting to around three million) of the empire's total population.<sup>41</sup> By 400 A.D. this may have risen to as much as half the total population.<sup>42</sup> Much the same conclusions are reached by other historians. Ramsay MacMullen considers that by 400 A.D. non-Christians may have reduced to being 'a very large minority'.<sup>43</sup> Although some of the Fathers took a more optimistic view regarding the size of the Christian population – for example Tertullian, as early as 211 A.D. claimed half the empire's population as being Christian<sup>44</sup> – many scholars have found this unconvincing. Quite dramatically, the number of church-going Christians appears to be surprisingly low. MacMullen cites archaeological evidence of two hundred and fifty-five churches in one hundred and fifty five towns and cities, revealing a church attendance capacity, by the end of the fourth century ranging between one and eight percent of the general population.<sup>45</sup> This strongly suggests that even on the most favourable arithmetical calculation, the vast majority of 'Christians' did not express their devotion in regular, formal, church attendance,<sup>46</sup> which raises the likelihood of widespread 'irregular' occasions which may not have complied with the anti-music and dance censure of the Fathers<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Bart D. Ehrman, *From Jesus to Constantine: A History of Early Christianity* (Chantilly, 2004), p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Ehrman, *Jesus to Constantine*, p. 50.

<sup>43</sup> MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire*, p. 83.

<sup>44</sup> Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 2: 10, *ANF* 1, p. 48. It could be argued that Tertullian considered this appeal for religious liberty and freedom of conscience, addressed to the African proconsul, Scapula, to be perceived as more weighty, if the numerical strength of Christians was overstated. Tertullian writes of the 'divine patience [of Christians, who are] ... all but the majority in every city ... conduct[ing] ourselves so quietly and modestly' (*ANF* 1, p. 48). See T. Herbert Bindly, *De Praescriptione Haereticorum: Ad Martyras: Ad Scapulam* (Oxford, 1893), p. 124. MacMullen comments on Tertullian's claims, in *Second Church*, p. 102.

<sup>45</sup> MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 101.

<sup>46</sup> On higher numbers worshipping less formally at cemeteries, see chapter one.

<sup>47</sup> What McKinnon describes as 'a curiously suspicious attitude towards these popular Christian celebrations' (*MECL*, p. 106), is found in Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia Religiosa* 20, in a passage which tells how Maris (an ascetic from Antioch) who 'had celebrated many festivals of the martyrs ... [and whose] mingling with the crowd had not spoiled his beauty of soul'. *MECL*, p. 106, *PG* LXXXII: 1429.

Whilst Christian ascetic practices are not necessarily pursued by all whose public acts of worship are rooted in the ‘officially sanctioned’, only to a lesser extent can such ascetic practices be identified with the more popular forms of worship associated with cemeteries – where eating, wine drinking, music and dance, seem not to have been uncommon practices. As Helmut Koester writes, ‘while only a small minority of them [Christians] went to church, most could have been found celebrating the memory of the departed with food and wine at the cemeteries, often in a manner that their bishops hardly approved’.<sup>48</sup>

If the contrast between ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ Christians, seems, in this study, to surface with some regularity, its relevance in a chapter concerned with asceticism is no exception. It may be argued that asceticism was a determinant in identifying an elite on the basis not of wealth, intellect, or social status, but on the ascetic quality of their lives. Certainly Eusebius would testify to this:

Two ways of life were thus given by the Lord to His Church. The one is above nature, and beyond common human living; it admits not marriage, childbearing, property nor the possession of wealth ... Like some celestial beings, these gaze down upon human life, performing the duty of priesthood to Almighty God for the whole race...

and the more humble, more human way prompts men to join in pure nuptials, and to produce children, to undertake government, to give orders to soldiers, fighting for right; it allows them to have minds for farming, for trade and for the other more secular interests as well as for religion.<sup>49</sup>

If, as the *Life of Anthony* informs us, by 357 A.D. ‘the desert was made a city by monks’,<sup>50</sup> and vast numbers, whether as hermits in the remote desert, or urban monks (such as the alleged five thousand who lived within the walls of Oxyrhynchus, in

<sup>48</sup> Helmut Koester, review of Ramsey MacMullen, *The Second Church*, and reproduced on the back cover of that publication.

<sup>49</sup> Eusebius, *Demomnstratio Evangelica* 1: 8, tr. W.J. Ferrar, *Translations of Christian Literature*, Series One (London, 1920).

<sup>50</sup> Athanasius, *The Life of Anthony*, 14.



addition to a further five thousand living beyond its walls) were clearly committed to some level of ascetic life,<sup>51</sup> the numbers less committed or not committed to the renunciations of asceticism may be countable in millions. Whilst the worship of the masses, infused with the music and dance of popular culture, incurred the condemnation of the Fathers, the chant of a more ascetic elite signalled the advent of liturgical singing, which flourished during the centuries examined in this study,<sup>52</sup> and later, reached its summit in the psalmody of the Carolingian world.

#### d) The body

For citizens of the Roman Empire, the responsibilities of citizenship included meeting the expectation of producing and nurturing sufficient children to replace the dead, in a society where less than five percent of the population would survive to celebrate their fiftieth birthday.<sup>53</sup> Whilst in upper-class circles, bachelors might suffer no more than the occasional rebuke of public-minded Emperors,<sup>54</sup> and Vestal Virgins at Rome, who, were they to marry at all, must await the age of thirty,<sup>55</sup> these were exceptions that reinforced and heightened awareness of procreative responsibility.

Medical opinion in the second century Roman Empire considered that males ‘were those foetuses who had realized their full potential. They had amassed a decisive surplus of “heat” and fervent “vital Spirit” in the early stages of coagulation ... women, by contrast, were failed males. The precious vital heat had not come to them in sufficient quantities in the womb’.<sup>56</sup> This maleness had to be protected. It wasn’t enough to be male, ‘a man had to strive to be “virile” ... each man trembled forever on the brink of being womanish ...[as] the small town notables watched each other

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<sup>51</sup> That the diversity of ascetic practice allowed for those accommodated in less basic living conditions, is indicated, if the findings of archaeological work at Kellia in Lower Egypt are in any way typical. Cells ‘came to include a courtyard, a vestibule, a hallway, an oratory, a bedroom for the ascete with a closet, an attached room, a room with a closet for the novice or servant, an office, a kitchen, and a latrine. The cells were, in addition, finely decorated’. See Goehring, *Ascetics*, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Especially in the fourth century, which McKinnon describes as ‘that period of singular enthusiasm for psalmody’, See *MECL*, p. 11.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Brown, *The Body and Society: Men, Women and Sexual Renunciation in Early Christianity* (New York, 1988), p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, *The Body*, pp. 9-10, citing Aretaeus, *Causes and Symptoms of Chronic Diseases* 2: 5, in F. Adams (tr.), *The Extant Works of Aretaeus the Cappadocian*, pp. 346-7.

with hard, clear eyes'.<sup>57</sup> In the writings of the Fathers, 'effeminacy' is frequently the focus of attack on male actors and musicians. Tatian (c.160 A.D.), for example, does not 'care to look benignly upon a man who is nodding and motioning in an unnatural way', nor does he wish to 'gape at many singers'.<sup>58</sup> Clement approves of a Scythian citizen being 'shot with an arrow since he had become unmanly among the Greeks and a teacher of the disease of effeminacy',<sup>59</sup> and, filled with revulsion over anything which smacks of homoeroticism, writes, 'For he who in the light of day denies his manhood, will prove himself manifestly a woman by night'.<sup>60</sup> In similar vein, Tertullian decries 'the effeminate tibicinist'.<sup>61</sup>

Whether homosexuality influences vocal quality seems not to be an area addressed by the Fathers. Perhaps, as Anke Bernau wrote of a later period, 'homosexuality is either completely ignored by these writers, or alluded to indirectly ... and thus rendered non-existent'.<sup>62</sup> There may or may not be such an allusion in Gregory of Nazianzus' condemnatory remarks concerning 'the breaking voices of pretty boys moving effeminately'.<sup>63</sup> That those excessively devoted to music can become effeminate (as indicated by writers such as Plato,<sup>64</sup> Aristotle, and Quintilian) is clearly in keeping with the Fathers charge of effeminacy against musicians and dancers who perform publically.

Clearly actors dressed as women (which attracted the severe condemnation of the Fathers), or male musicians exhibiting a sensitivity suggestive of a man having a feminine side to his nature, would hardly be compatible with the ideal of the virile male. That such attitudes pre-date Christian thought is evidenced in the 80s B.C. The *Rhetorica ad Herennium* advises the ideal orator to achieve vocal flexibility without

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, *The Body*, p. 11.

<sup>58</sup> Tatian, *Discourse to the Greeks* 22, *MECL*, p. 22, *PG* VI, 857.

<sup>59</sup> Clement, *Protrepticus* 2: 24, 1, *MECL*, p. 31, *PG* VIII, 89-92.

<sup>60</sup> Clement, *Paedagogus* 3:3, *ANF* 2, p. 277.

<sup>61</sup> Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 30: 3, *MECL*, p. 44, *PL* I, 656-7.

<sup>62</sup> Anke Bernau, *Virgins, A Cultural History* (London, 2007), p. 65.

<sup>63</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Carmina* 211, *MECL* p. 147, *PG* XXXVII: 1438.

<sup>64</sup> A representative example might be seen in Plato's *Republic* III: 410, p. 101, as 'the mere athlete becomes too much of a savage ... the mere musician is melted and softened beyond what is good for him'.

sounding like a woman, or an actor.<sup>65</sup> Maud W. Gleason brings to our attention that any deviation from plainness of note, when singing, was considered by Cicero to be unmanly and degenerate, –‘How much more effeminate and luxurious are trills and runs and falsetto notes in singing than plain notes firmly held!’.<sup>66</sup> Brutally, 390 A.D. saw the public burning, in Rome, of male prostitutes – dragged from the homosexual brothels. As Peter Brown writes ‘For a male to play a female role by allowing himself to become the passive partner is a sexual act, had long been repugnant ... it was now assumed to be equally shocking that a soul allotted in perpetuity ... a recognizably male body should have tried to force that body into female poses’.<sup>67</sup> Into such scenes fits the demonisation of musicians and dancers:

Lascivious souls abandon themselves to bizarre movements of the body,  
dancing and singing ... in men they become male prostitutes, and in women  
harlots, sambucists and harpists.<sup>68</sup>

In that frequent sexual activity was believed to decrease the fertility of the male seed, medical science cautioned due circumspection. Preoccupation with loss of vital spirit ‘is one of the many notions that gave male continence a firm foothold in the folk wisdom of the world in which Christian celibacy would soon be preached’.<sup>69</sup> If it was believed that the performance of Olympic athletes could benefit from castration, and that the bass resonance of the courtroom lawyer could be enhanced by abstinence from sex,<sup>70</sup> that such might have relevance in the undistracted practice of Christian virtue, is perhaps, hardly surprising. Cassian adds a little flesh to the bone (if it may be so inappropriately put) when expounding on what Paul had in mind when writing

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<sup>65</sup> Maud W. Gleason, *Making Men: Sophists and Self-presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton, 1995), p. 104.

<sup>66</sup> *Brutus, or the History of Eloquence*, 43. 158, Gleason, *Making Men*, p. 108. The importance of a manly demeanour is, of course, highly important to Cicero. As he brings to our attention, posture must be ‘erect and manly’ with ‘no effeminate airs of the head’. Cicero criticises Hortensius (a military Tribune), as ‘he had a sweet and sonorous voice, and his gesture has rather more art in it, and was more exactly managed, than is requisite to an Orator’. Cicero, *Brutus, or the History of Eloquence*, tr. E. Jones, 1776 (reprinted Teddington, 2007), pp. 81 and 60 respectively. The latter remark of Cicero (had rather more art in it ...), it may be noted in passing, has something of a feminine equivalent in the comment of Lucian of Samosata (cited later in this chapter), concerning a woman who ‘danced more elegantly than was becoming an upright woman’.

<sup>67</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 383.

<sup>68</sup> Arnobius (d. c 330AD), *Adversus nationes* 2: 42, *MECL*, p. 49, *PL V*, 881-2.

<sup>69</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 19.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19 citing Artemidorus, and Quintillian, respectively.

‘All who compete in the Games are very abstemious’<sup>71</sup> explaining that athletes in training ‘cover their loins with lead plates, so that the contact of the cold metal on their genitals may restrain any sexual arousal’ fearing loss of strength ‘if a fantasy of lust were to corrupt their solidly grounded modesty’.<sup>72</sup> The avoidance of lust appears to have been a major preoccupation.

Whilst for swathes of believers, renunciation of sexual activity had been integral to Christian identity,<sup>73</sup> for the majority of ‘ordinary’ Christians this was limited to the exercise of certain restraints – notably short periods of abstinence during penitential times of the year. Athanasius wrote, ‘It is a good thing if a young man becomes the head of a household and begets children’,<sup>74</sup> and Chrysostom, in positive vein, described woman’s conception, ‘as if she were gold receiving the purest gold, the woman receives the man’s seed with rich pleasure’.<sup>75</sup> The relevance to this study being that for such ‘ordinary’ Christians, whose lives were not overly burdened with the constraints of asceticism, normal family life is unlikely to be devoid of participation in music and dance in worship. Or indeed, music as a leisure activity along with such other forms of entertainment as the Christian masses seem to have persisted in - despite the constant grumbings of the Fathers.

#### e) Exegesis

In her 1999 study of asceticism and scripture in early Christianity, *Reading Renunciation*, Elizabeth A. Clark makes the point that the exegetical problem confronting early writers who wished ‘to ground their renunciatory program in the Bible’<sup>76</sup> was finding only sporadic support for their agenda, but, by repositioning and recontextualizing verses or individual words, Biblical passages ‘could be pressed to promote an ascetic form of Christianity’.<sup>77</sup> It is not of course suggested that the

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<sup>71</sup> 1 Corinthians 9:25.

<sup>72</sup> Cassian, *The Monastic Institutes*, 7.

<sup>73</sup> E.g. the Manichees and the Messalians.

<sup>74</sup> Athanasius, *Letter to Amoun*, Brown, *NPNF* (2), 6, PG 26, 1073.

<sup>75</sup> Chrysostom, *Homily 12 on Colossians 5*, tr. John Henry Parker, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom on the Epistles of St Paul to the Philippians, Colossians and the Thessalonians* (Oxford, 1843), p. 318, PG 62, 388.

<sup>76</sup> Clark, *Reading Renunciation*, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

creation of ascetic propaganda was the prime motivator in the rise of allegorical interpretation – either in Christian writing or earlier. The obscurities of Scripture long necessitated the practice of biblical exegesis – literal or allegorical – by both Jews and Christians. Writing around the time of Christ, Philo of Alexandria, who ‘embodied the culmination of Hellenistic philosophy and at the same time represented the full development of Hellenistic Judaism’,<sup>78</sup> is described by Richard N. Longenecker as treating the Old Testament as a ‘body of symbols given by God for man’s spiritual and moral benefit, which must be understood other than in a literal and historic fashion’.<sup>79</sup> In Alexandria, Christian writers, too, were especially attracted to allegorical interpretation, from which developed an ‘Alexandrian school’ whose earliest exponents were Clement and Origen. It may also be noted, that for the early Church, wishing to claim the ‘Old Testament’ as its heritage whilst not embracing the whole of Jewish law, allegorical interpretation provided valuable support. This study being primarily concerned with the use and suppression of music – especially instrumental music – in early Christian worship, it is the relationship between music and exegesis that must determine the aspects of the subject to be examined.

On the role of music and musical instruments as a tool of allegorical biblical interpretation – in the important area of patristic musical imagery, McKinnon writes, ‘It is after all the musical manifestation of a world view – shared by many church fathers with the pagan proponents of Platonism’s later stages – that sees material objects as signs of spirituality’.<sup>80</sup> The following is an example from Pseudo-Origen<sup>81</sup>:

The cithara is the practical soul activated by the commandments of Christ. The tympanum is the death of covetousness through goodness itself ... The strings are the harmony of the balanced sound of virtues and instruments ... The well-sounding cymbal is the active soul ... the clangourous cymbal is the pure mind made live by the salvation of Christ.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Curtis D. McClane, ‘The Hellenistic Background to the Pauline Allegoric Method in Galatians 4. 21-31’, *Restoration Quarterly* 40. 2 (1998), p. 126.

<sup>79</sup> Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids, 1999), p. 31.

<sup>80</sup> *MECL*, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> The commentary from which this passage is taken, attributed to Origen, is, in the opinion of McKinnon, the work of Evagrius Ponticus (346-99 A.D.).

<sup>82</sup> Pseudo-Origen, *Selecta in psalmos* 32: 2-3, *MECL*, p. 7, *PG* XII, 1304,

Condemnation of the practical use of musical instruments is given by exegete and theologian of the Antiochene school, Theodoret of Cyrus, commenting on psalm 150, – ‘The Levites employed these instruments long ago as they hymned God in his holy Temple, not because God enjoyed their sound but because he accepted the intention of those involved’.<sup>83</sup> A half-century earlier Chrysostom writes, ‘there is no need of the cithara, nor taut strings, nor the plectrum and technique, not any sort of instrument; but if you wish, make of yourself a cithara, by mortifying the limbs of your flesh and creating full harmony between body and soul’.<sup>84</sup> The Father’s denunciation of the use of musical instruments, perceived as drenched in the contaminations of paganism – a major reoccurring theme of this study – does not preclude Christians having practical knowledge of real musical instruments if this is useful in interpreting Scripture. As Augustine states, it is not necessary to ‘shun music because of the superstition of the heathen, if we are able to snatch from it anything useful for the understanding of the Holy Scriptures ... if we consider some point concerning citharas and other instruments which might be of aid in comprehending spiritual things’.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, Augustine tells us that ‘an ignorance of certain musical questions shuts off and conceals much.’<sup>86</sup>

The impact of allegorical interpretation of musical instruments would, of course, be minimal were it not a ‘given’ that those addressed (including the aurally addressed masses) were assumed to have sufficient knowledge of musical instruments – presumably gained from such contact with instrumental music as took place in the course of their normal lives – as would enable them to understand the allusions made. Perhaps it was not infrequently that the average Christian:

After reverently attending to the discourse about God ... left what they had heard within, while outside they amuse themselves with godless things, with the plucking of strings and the erotic wailing of the aulos, defiling themselves

<sup>83</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus, *Interpretatio in psalmos* 150, *MECL*, p. 106, *PG* LXXX, 1996.

<sup>84</sup> Chrysostom, *In psalmum XLI*, 2, *MECL*, p. 81, *PG* LV, 158.

<sup>85</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, tr. J.F. Shaw (Edinburgh, 1892), 2: 18: 28, p. 165, *PL*. XXXIV, 49.

<sup>86</sup> Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, tr. Shaw, 2: 6: 27, p. 165, *PL*, XXXIV, 48-9.

with dancing ...<sup>87</sup>

What cannot be deduced, from either the disparaging of musicians, or the allegorising of their instruments, is that actual music making was absent within the context of early Christian worship. To do so, as Christopher Page writes, 'would be to go well beyond any generalization the fragmentary materials for early Christian music license us to make'.<sup>88</sup>

Situations involving the use of music, similar to those found in more central Christendom, are also encountered at the periphery. But a higher level of tolerance, in preference to confrontation, seems to have been the precursor of conversion. For example in an Irish culture, as Proinsias Mac Cana writes, 'In most of its aspects the story of Irish Christianity is one of compromise and syncretism ... those who formulated ecclesiastical attitudes tended to make a distinction between benign paganism and malignant paganism'.<sup>89</sup> Here, where the masses and elite prized the arts of music and dance, emerging exegesis (albeit mostly dating from the later years of concern to this study, and beyond), from a society well acquainted with musical instrument imagery in its folk-lore, made no use of its allegoric capabilities to deprecate an art held dear.<sup>90</sup> Indeed the hagiography of Irish saints is rich in

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<sup>87</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor* 3: 11, *ANF* 2, p. 290, *PG* VIII, 660.

<sup>88</sup> Page, *The Christian West*, p. 31.

<sup>89</sup> Proinsias Mac Cana, 'The Sinless Otherworld of Immram Bran', Jonathan M. Wooding (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature* (Dublin, 2000), p. 53.

<sup>90</sup> An example of how early acceptance of music and dance is perceived in later writing is to be found in the fifteenth century *Acallam na Senorach* (Colloquy of the Ancient Men), which depicts Patrick and his clergy entertained by song and harp, and eventually lulled to sleep. The alleged dialogue of Patrick and fellow cleric Brogan on awakening, reads:-

A good cast of ... art was that ...' said Brogan. 'Good indeed it were' said

Patrick, 'but for a twang of the fairy spell that infests it; barring which nothing could

More nearly than it, resemble Heaven's harmony'. Says Brogan, 'if music there be in

Heaven, why should there not be on earth? ...as it is not right to banish away minstrelsy.'

Patrick answered: 'neither say I any such thing, but merely inculcate that we must not

be inordinately addicted to it'. See S.H. O'Grady (ed.), *Silva Gadelica* 2, p. 267, Karen Ralls-MacLeod,

*Music and the Otherworld*, pp. 30-31.

references supportive of music; for example the alleged miracle of (St) Kieran in reviving eight dead harpers – hardly an act likely to silence the strains of instrumental music.

If an allegorical interpretation of musical instruments is not found in surviving Irish exegetical tracts, it may indicate a lack of desire to transform musical instruments from their role in practical performance, to an allegoric role.<sup>91</sup> It is certainly not because such imagery was unknown. Allusion to human body parts and the parts of musical instruments is to be found in early Irish literature. A rather grotesque example of ‘the body as an instrument’ is given by Ralls-MacLeod, where a harper makes a harp from the bones (finger bones for tuning-pins etc.) of a woman murdered by her sister. In due course the harp itself denounces the murderess.<sup>92</sup> Indeed beyond exegetical tracts, Irish literature is brimming with imagery and allegory.<sup>93</sup>

## **2. Gender: The place of women in patristic attitudes.**

As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is hardly surprising that cultures infused with the concept of male superiority retained such concepts in Christianized form. Perhaps representative of attitudes to women is a comment found in Isidore of Seville (c. 560–636 A.D.), who wrote:

Women stand under the power of their husbands because they are quite often deceived by the fickleness of their minds. Whence, it was right that they were repressed by the authority of men. Consequently, the ancients wanted their unwed women, even those of mature age, to live in guardianship, on account of their fickle minds.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Such exegetical tracts as have survived would not seem to contradict this.

<sup>92</sup> Ralls-MacLeod, *Celtic Otherworld*, p. 69.

<sup>93</sup> James Carney, ‘The Earliest Bran Material’, Jonathan M. Wooding (ed.), *The Otherworld Voyage in Early Irish Literature* (Dublin, 2000), p. 73. Prime examples are undoubtedly the *immrama* – perhaps most especially *Immram Brain*, and *Nauigatio sancti Brendani abbatis*.

<sup>94</sup> Isidore of Seville, *Etymologies*, tr. Stephen A. Barney (Cambridge, 2006), 9, 7: 29, p. 212.



As the logic of their Christian belief imposed on the Fathers an acceptance of the equality of all the baptized, yet as woman was ‘made inferior by nature, law, and the social-patriarchal order’,<sup>95</sup> the ensuing tension was resolved in the concept that ‘on the level of the soul there is neither male nor female, but on the historical-creational level woman has to be subordinated to man’.<sup>96</sup>

To the extent that the attitude of the Fathers was strongly in favour of celibacy, sexual urges were to be vehemently resisted. Or perhaps a more accurate description would be ‘sublimated’. Macarius, in his *Spiritual Homilies* writes of ascetics who ‘daily perceive in themselves that they are spiritually progressing toward their spiritual Bridegroom ... for they have been accepted by and found greatly pleasing to the spiritual Bridegroom’.<sup>97</sup> Such persons as these ‘are totally penetrated by the Holy Spirit’.<sup>98</sup> If such phraseology seems not without a hint of eroticism, in some sublimated way providing an outlet for what may perhaps be regarded as sexual fantasizing, this is likewise evident in Jerome’s letter XXII: 25, when instructing that the virgin must ‘guard the temple of her body and give no man access. Only her bridegroom, Jesus, may come to her in her chamber, gaze upon her, play with her, and touch her’.<sup>99</sup> Geoffrey Galt Harpham, in *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism*, similarly comments, ‘the difference between the pleasures of the figural Bridegroom and those of any literal one is not altogether clear; one cannot say with complete confidence that ascetic ‘sport’ is altogether non-erotic’.<sup>100</sup>

Whilst for a male, the goal of the ascetic life is union with the divine through self-denial, for the female, sexual imagery is frequently employed in describing the goal as union with the divine through marriage to Christ, the celestial bridegroom. An illustration from Evagrius of Pontus reads:

The virginal eyes will see the Lord. The virgins’ ears will listen to his

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<sup>95</sup> Fiorenza, *In Memory*, p. 277.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277.

<sup>97</sup> Marcarius, *Spiritual Homilies*, 10: 1, 88 and 4: 6, 52, in Pseudo-Macarius, tr. George A. Maloney, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter* (New York, 1992), pp. 88 and 53 respectively.

<sup>98</sup> Marcarius, *Spiritual Homilies*, 18: 10, p. 145.

<sup>99</sup> Jerome, ‘Letter 22, to Eustochium’ 25, *NPNF* (2), p. 32.

<sup>100</sup> Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *The Ascetic Imperative in Culture and Criticism* (Chicago, 1987), p. 46.

words. The virgins' mouth will kiss their bridegroom, and the virgins' nose will rush towards the scent of his perfume. Virginal hands will stroke the Lord, and the chastity of their flesh will be pleasing to him. The virginal soul will be crowned, and she will live forever with her bridegroom.<sup>101</sup>

Within such an appreciation of womanliness, it may be argued as unsurprising that the condemnation of the Fathers is more frequently and more strongly directed towards woman musicians (and dancers) than men.<sup>102</sup>

### *Attitudes to marriage.*

One of the pillars of social activity vulnerable to the persuasive power of austere asceticism, was the institution of marriage. Arguably this dates back to Paul, and is expressed starkly by Peter Brown:-

[by an] essentially negative, even alarmist, strategy, Paul left a fatal legacy to future ages. An argument against abandoning sexual intercourse within marriage and in favour of allowing the younger generation to continue to have children slid imperceptibly into an attitude that viewed marriage itself as no more than a defence against desire. In the future, a sense of the presence of 'Satan', in the form of a constant and ill-defined risk of lust, lay like a heavy shadow in the corner of every Christian church.<sup>103</sup>

This contrasts with Judaism, where, though the practice of celibacy was not unknown, a different resolution to that promulgated by the Fathers, at least so far as the disciplines of sacred study are concerned, can be found in the *Babylonian Talmud*. Daniel Boyarin writes:

The privileging of virginity in the Church ... allowed for the division

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<sup>101</sup> Evagrius of Pontus, *Sententiae ad virginem* 55, tr. Augustine Casiday, *Sententiae ad virginem* (Abingdon, 2006), p. 243.

<sup>102</sup> Discussed later in this study.

<sup>103</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 19.

of humanity into two classes: the religious, who were able to be wholly devoted to the spirit, and the householder, who married and reproduced. ... In contrast to other cultural formations, both Jewish and non-Jewish, which formulate the problem as a conflict between body and spirit, the Rabbis do not set this up as a hierarchy of values ... Rabbinic texts provide several attempts to produce social practices that would resolve the tension between marriage and the study of the Torah, between sex and the text.<sup>104</sup>

Certainly, the capacity to renounce sex is not seen as an indicator of a particular level of spirituality. By Talmudic law, a man is under contractual obligation to sleep regularly with his wife. If the Torah-scholar is studying away from home, he should, at least, come home and sleep with his wife every Friday night.<sup>105</sup> For the ascetic elite Christian no such Friday night concept was conscionable. The most powerful manifestation of the life of the body being its sexual yearnings; if 'the body's life was the soul's death, salvation lay in mortifying it'.<sup>106</sup>

Christian writers who strongly defended marriage as not inferior to virginity would seem to be very much in the minority. It would also seem, perhaps because they did not conform to the thinking of most of the ascetic elite, that much of what they wrote has been 'airbrushed out' of the pages of history. What remains of their writing is, for the most part, limited to extracts quoted in the works of those who refuted what Helvidius, Jovinian, Vigilantius, Julian of Eclanum, etc., had written.<sup>107</sup> But whilst marriage might be seen by the more ascetic Fathers as 'second best' to celibacy, it was, nonetheless, a relative good, Chrysostom, for example, writing, '[whilst] I believe virginity is much more honourable than marriage ... I do not of course count marriage among evil things, rather I praise it exceedingly'.<sup>108</sup> Such praise, however, did not prevent Chrysostom's warning potential husbands:

<sup>104</sup> *Babylonian Talmud Kiddushin* 29b, Daniel Boyarin, *Carnal Israel: Reading Sex in Talmudic Culture* (Berkeley, 1993), p. 138.

<sup>105</sup> Boyarin, *Carnal Israel*, p. 148.

<sup>106</sup> E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 29.

<sup>107</sup> The arguments of the four above named were contested by Jerome or Augustine.

<sup>108</sup> Chrysostom, *On Virginity*, 9: 1 and 2, in Chrysostom, tr. Sally Rieger Shore, *On Virginity* (Lampeter, 1983), pp. 14-15.

What if a husband is moderate but his wife is wicked, carping, a chatterbox, extravagant (the affliction common to all womankind), filled with many other faults, how will the poor fellow endure this daily unpleasantness, this conceit, this impudence?<sup>109</sup>

That is not to say the life of the ascetic Christian was everywhere considered to be incompatible with married life, or that the life of the celibate Christian ascetic excluded music and dance within legitimate liturgical worship. The latter is discussed in relation to the dancing priests of the Ethiopian Church, and Ireland can be argued as an example of the former.<sup>110</sup> Indeed before drawing widespread conclusions, the wide spectrum of attitudes towards marriage which can be observed within Irish monastic society, may be noted. Monasticism seems to have particularly resonated with the Irish, for whom, as Chalwyn James writes, ‘the intimate environment of tribal society ... favoured the establishment of hereditary monastic druids, married and with families’.<sup>111</sup> Certainly, in Ireland, there seems to have been a broader approach to the celibacy of monks and priests,<sup>112</sup> with some monasteries having hereditary abbots, and larger monastic settlements providing accommodation for married priests and their families.<sup>113</sup> At the sterner end of the spectrum, however, some layfolk, legitimately married, lived ‘under an ecclesiastical regime of continence’.<sup>114</sup> That in Ireland, ascetic attitudes seem to display a moral neutrality towards music and dance, is discussed elsewhere.<sup>115</sup>

### *Women's voices*

Participation of women in sung worship could present difficulties. Some Fathers regarded the devotionally singing female voice as provocative, and attempted to suppress such singing. Thoughts of being ‘brought down to the passions of the flesh

<sup>109</sup> Chrysostom, *On Virginity*, XL: 1, pp. 59-60.

<sup>110</sup> Discussed in chapters one and three.

<sup>111</sup> Chalwyn James, *An Age of Saints* (Llanerch, 1996), p.60.

<sup>112</sup> T.M. Charles-Edwards, *Early Christian Ireland* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 225.

<sup>113</sup> James, *Age of Saints*, p. 69.

<sup>114</sup> Colman Etchingham, *Church Organisation in Ireland AD 650-1000* (Laigin, 1999), p. 250.

<sup>115</sup> See especially pp. 13, 25-6, 65-7, 75-6.

by the pleasure of the song',<sup>116</sup> or that women might 'misuse the sweetness of melody to arouse passion',<sup>117</sup> were real concerns. Examples of prohibition would include 'woman are ordered not to speak in church, not even softly, nor may they sing along or take part in the responses, but they should only be silent and pray to God',<sup>118</sup> and, dating around the same time, Cyril of Jerusalem (c.315-c.386/7), 'they should only move their lips, so that nothing is heard, for I do not permit women to speak in church'.<sup>119</sup> The practice of earlier times is somewhat speculative. Isidore of Pelusium (d.440) comments, 'perhaps women were originally permitted by the Apostles and presbyters to join in singing so as to prevent their gossiping in church ... but later this permission was withdrawn'.<sup>120</sup> Whilst Tertullian certainly approved of husband and wife singing psalms and hymns 'to see who sings better to the Lord',<sup>121</sup> this is presumably a more private form of worship. The evolving dogmatic formulations of the Church made clear that the role of women in church was 'only to pray and listen'.<sup>122</sup> Whilst, in many instances, members of the male elite sought to silence – in male presence – the singing of women, such ambition was not universal. Ambrose is frequently cited: 'The Apostle admonishes women to be silent in church, yet they do well to join in a psalm; this is ... fitting for both sexes'.<sup>123</sup>

<sup>116</sup> Basil, *Homilia in psalmum* I: 2, *MECL*, p. 66, *PG* XXIX, 213.

<sup>117</sup> Isidore of Pelusium (d.435), *Epistle* I, 90, *MECL*, p. 61, *PG* LXXVIII, 244-5.

<sup>118</sup> *Didascalia of the Three Hundred and Eighteen Fathers*, dating c. 375, *MW*, p. 81.

<sup>119</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatich* 14, *MW*, p. 81.

<sup>120</sup> Isidore of Pelusium, *Epistle* I, 90, *MECL*, p. 61, *PG* LXXVII, 244-5.

<sup>121</sup> Tertullian, *Ad uxorem* 2, 7, 8-9, *MECL*, p. 44, *PL* I, 1304.

<sup>122</sup> Fourth century *Apostolic Constitution* canon 3: 6. The silence of women seems, at least from the close of the first century B.C., to have been less than total in the Forum and the courts of law. One such example noted by Valerius Maximus, is that of a senator's wife, named Carfania, who 'always spoke on her own behalf before the praetor, not because she could not find advocates but because she had impudence to spare'. See Valerius Maximus, *Memorable Deeds and Sayings* 8.3.2., cited R.A. Bauman, *Woman and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London, 1992), p. 50. Bauman writes of 'a line of woman versed in at least the theory of the law, and possibly with some practical experience as well' (Bauman, *Women and Politics*, p. 50), and Bruce W. Winter of 'the rise of women advocates ... highly effective as lawyers' (Bruce W. Winter, *Roman Wives, Roman Widows: The Appearance of New Women and the Pauline Communities*, Grand Rapids, 2003, p. 115). As was Roman legal convention, married women, in public, wore a head veil, and this was expected of married Christian women when prophesying (I Corinthians 11:10). That in Corinth this seems to have been flouted (I Corinthians 11:16), at a time when, in Rome, women 'with impudence to spare' were addressing the courts, might seem to suggest a current of 'women's liberation' (see Winter, *Roman Wives*, pp. 77-96), giving rise to male consternation. The musical activities of women in church may not be unconnected from the wider context of what was permitted more generally in the social setting of Roman legal convention, intensified by any challenges this was facing.

<sup>123</sup> Ambrose, *Explanatio psalmi* i, 9, *MECL*, p. 126, *PL* XIV, 924-5.

Susan Ashbrook Harvey, writing on the Syrian churches, brings to our attention the tradition of including women's choirs in the liturgy. That Syriac Christianity seems at once austere – for example restricting, well into the third, if not early fourth centuries, both baptism and Eucharist to the celibate,<sup>124</sup> within such groups of celibate Christians there evolved, for both sexes, levels of popular singing 'livelier, bolder, or even shocking in comparison with scholarly commentaries',<sup>125</sup> where 'the heart of Syriac Christianity was not in the subtleties of philosophical discourse but in the subtleties of the lyrical spirit'.<sup>126</sup> Of Syria and Northern Iraq, by the late third century, Brown writes of 'the Psalms and the self-composed hymns that are the glory of the Syriac church [where] unjoined in bodies, young men and women were truly joined by the ethereal harmony of their voices, kept sweet by the absence of sexual activity'.<sup>127</sup> Brown cites Ephrem:

... lovely voices; tongues all in pairs,  
 uttered together in chaste fashion,  
 foreshadowing our festival day,  
 when unmarried girls and boys  
 sing together in innocence ...<sup>128</sup>

Reference to voices replicating the sounds of musical instruments (Bardaisan and Ephrem seem to have used the cithara in the training of choirs<sup>129</sup>) is not uncommon in the hymns of Ephrem:

... innocent young women and men sounding like trumpets and horns,  
 while infant girls and boys resemble harps and lyres.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Sebastian P. Brock and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (California, 1998 [1987]), pp 7-8.

<sup>125</sup> Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Song and Memory: Biblical Woman in Syriac Tradition* (Marquette, 2010), p. 20.

<sup>126</sup> Brock and Harvey, *Holy Women*, p. 11. That Syriac texts 'have contributed to the effort to consider ancient Christianity in terms broader than the Greek and Latin literature of the Roman empire, see Sebastian P. Brock, and Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Holy Women of the Syrian Orient* (Berkeley, 1987), xii-xvi.

<sup>127</sup> Brown, *The Body*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>128</sup> Ephrem the Syrian, *Hymns on the Resurrection*, 2: 4 tr. S.P. Brock, given in Brown, *The Body*, p. 102.

<sup>129</sup> Discussed in chapter three.

<sup>130</sup> Ephrem, 'Joy at the Resurrection', in Sebastian P. Brock and George A. Kiraz (trs.), *Ephrem the Syrian: Select Poems* (Provo, 2009), p. 171.

Within Syriac spirituality, it might be argued that asceticism was integral to its hymnology – generating, not inhibiting musically expressed worship.<sup>131</sup> The formation of women’s choirs, and Ephrem’s role in this, is the subject of Jacob of Serug’s *Metrical Homily on Mar Ephrem*, which imaginatively describes how Ephrem might invite women to form a choir. Harvey writes, ‘above all, Jacob sings, Eve had closed the mouth of women, but Mary their sister had opened it again; and opened it to sing forth with praise’.<sup>132</sup> Jacob writes:

Until now, your gender was brought low because of Eve;  
but from now on, it is restored by Mary to sing Alleluia ...  
Uncover your faces to sing praise without shame  
to the One who granted you freedom and speech by his birth.<sup>133</sup>

Whilst women’s singing did not go uncontested in Syriac Christianity,<sup>134</sup> choirs of consecrated women were tasked with liturgical singing in civic churches, with emphasis placed on the instructional role these choirs played in educating the larger Christian community in matters of orthodoxy and heresy.<sup>135</sup> The normality of such women’s choirs ‘in every village, town, and city church’ is brought to our attention by Susan Ashbrook Harvey, who writes of ‘the great fifth century bishop Rabbula of Edessa (d. 436) at whose funeral there were said to have been eighteen choirs of deaconesses’.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> In passing it might be noted that the Syriac *Canons of the Apostles*, in commanding that ‘there be elders and deacons, like the Levites’ invites speculation as to whether this implies any musical duties which might be associated with the Levites, should now come within the duties of elders and deacons. If so, what musical meaning (e.g. instrumental accompaniment of psalms) might be legitimately employed. See P. Pratten (tr.), *Syriac Documents Attributed to the First Three Centuries* (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 39. That such vocalisations may not have been devoid of instrumental accompaniment is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>132</sup> Harvey, *Song and Memory*, p. 91.

<sup>133</sup> Jacob of Serug, *Metrical Homily on Holy Mar Ephrem* 111-3, Harvey, *Song and Memory*, pp. 91-2.

<sup>134</sup> Susan Ashbrook Harvey, ‘Spoken Words, Voiced Silence: Biblical Women in Syriac Tradition’, *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 9: 1 (2001), p. 125.

<sup>135</sup> Harvey, ‘Spoken Words’, p. 127.

<sup>136</sup> Harvey, *Song and Memory*, p. 31, citing Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Macrina*, tr. Virginia Callahan, *Saint Gregory of Nyssa* (Washington, 1969), p. 171.

For Jerome, in the Latin West, however, women had been granted no such freedom of speech. The instruction was clear, ‘women are to sing psalms in their chambers, away from the company of men’.<sup>137</sup> It may be argued that any attempted suppression of women singing in public worship, had, in its instigation, a twin motivation: firstly, the subordination of women to men, and secondly, the dubious reputation of dancers, actors, singers, and instrumentalists. Moreover, attacks on female musicians and other performers, vastly outweighed, in number and severity, attacks on male performers (where, as mentioned above, the standard denigrating description of ‘effeminate’,<sup>138</sup> hardly constitutes an equivalent to the ‘devil/harlot’ terminology consistently applied to women). It is perhaps unsurprising that the *Commandments of the Fathers, Superiors and Masters* decree (A.D. 576), was similarly gender discriminating – ‘Christians are not allowed to teach their daughters singing, or the playing of musical instruments’.<sup>139</sup>

The notion of women as inferior to men, or the dubious qualities of women perceived as ‘daughters of Eve’, discussed earlier in this chapter, might be advanced when a female musician and dancer ‘played the cithara and danced more elegantly than was becoming to an upright woman’.<sup>140</sup> But the blanket disparaging of female musicians and dancers may be argued as excessive and disproportionate. Not all *hetairai* (female companions) providing after dinner entertainment were prostitutes. The Roman epigrammatist Martial (40–104 A.D.), assured a potential dinner guest:

...nor will lascivious girls from lewd Gades [Cadiz] wiggle their hips  
with skilfully obscene swaying. I will provide entertainment which is  
neither serious nor frivolous. You will hear a small flute. Such will be  
my little dinner party’.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Jerome, *Dialogus contra pelagianos* 1, 25, *MECL*, p. 145, *PL* XXIII, 519.

<sup>138</sup> That said, the quotation from Clement (*Protrepticus* II, 24) given above, may carry an underlying insinuation of male prostitution. Accusation that men who dance and sing ‘become male prostitutes’ is to be found in Arnobius (d.330), *Adversus nations* 2: 42, *MECL*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>139</sup> *MW*, p. 83, citing W. Riedel, *Kirchenrechtsquellen*, p. 191.

<sup>140</sup> Lucian of Samosata (c.115 –c.200), *Dialogues of a Courtesan*, *MW*, p. 83.

<sup>141</sup> Jo-Ann Shelton, *The Women of Pliny’s Letters* (London, 2012), p. 358.



Not dissimilar after dinner entertainment is described by Pliny the Younger, reprimanding an invited dinner guest who failed to attend, ‘you would have heard comic actors or a reader or a lute player’.<sup>142</sup>

The coercion of female performers who were slaves,<sup>143</sup> ‘made to drink until intoxicated, dance in an unbecoming manner, and to sing ridiculous songs’,<sup>144</sup> begs questions concerning where moral condemnation should be placed. But the sinfulness of Eve, devolved on her daughters, blended with high levels of immorality attributed to musical performers, was sufficient to generate powerful condemnation of female musicians and dancers. Instrument playing, was seen as so linked to immorality, that Jerome (c.345-420) writes to Laeta, advising on the education of her daughter, ‘let her be deaf to musical instruments; let her not know why the tibia, lyre and cithara are made’.<sup>145</sup> Given the lightest dusting with a feminist brush, expressed fears concerning the moral danger to a young girl enthralled by the sound of the lyre, may be thought overshadowed by the seductive temptation such a scene of youthful feminine musical performance might present to the condemning Father. Elizabeth Abbott goes so far as to write of ‘lust tormented monks and priests’<sup>146</sup> who believed that women, as fully accredited ‘daughters of Eve’ were more likely than men to initiate sexual transgression. Criticism of the Fathers would seem on occasion, however, to lack awareness of the chasm which separates the culture of their world from ours. Any assumption that such a chasm can be easily crossed by the application of twenty-first century notions of gender equality to attitudes prevalent during the early centuries of Christianity, is clearly unsafe as a basis of judgment.

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<sup>142</sup> Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 1: 15, in Pliny the Younger, tr. Betty Radice, *The Letters of the Younger Pliny* (Harmondsworth, 1969), p. 49. The guest had preferred to dine elsewhere on ‘richer food’ accompanied by ‘Spanish dancers’.

<sup>143</sup> It was not until the first half of the sixth century that it became illegal to compel slaves to perform against their will. See Chambers, *Medieval Stage*, p. 16.

<sup>144</sup> Smith, *Female Disciple*, p. 264. That female slave performers were treated as sexual objects, see J. Michele Edwards, ‘Women in Music to ca. 1450’, Karin Pendle (ed.), *Women and Music: A History* (Bloomington, 1991), p. 26.

<sup>145</sup> Jerome, *Epistle* 107: 9, *MECL*, p. 142, *PL* XXII, 875.

<sup>146</sup> Elizabeth Abbott, *A History of Celibacy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999), p. 137.

### 3. Asceticism: its growth, and challenges to the ascetic ideal.

Around a half century ago, in *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety*, E.R. Dodds, having described a scene containing ‘repulsive examples’ of ‘continuous self-torture’, where ‘hatred of the body was a disease endemic in the entire culture of the period’, asked a question which was to provoke considerable response from subsequent scholars and historians – ‘Where did all this madness come from?’<sup>147</sup> Concerning the origins of ‘this madness’, J. Gager responded, ‘we need not ask “where does it come from?” but “what does it say?”’<sup>148</sup> and along much the same lines, Lucy Grig suggested the alternative question of ‘why these excesses were to the taste of late antique Christians, and furthermore, how can they be understood?’<sup>149</sup> Over the next three decades, such was the controversy sparked by Dodds’ remark of ‘madness’ that Teresa M. Shaw refers to ‘E.R. Dodds’s now famous query’.<sup>150</sup> <sup>151</sup> Dodds’ question, and the variety of responses, has indicated a diversity of understanding with regard to what asceticism is, and of the many forms its appearance can take. A description of asceticism given by Richard Valantasis, in *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism*,<sup>152</sup> is a desire ‘to live a different sort of life, to resist the tendency simply to live like all other people’.<sup>153</sup> Valantasis cites for example, the Orthodox monk, who, by means of ascetic practices, for example fasting, withdrawal, meditation, conflict with demons, ‘learns to live within another world ... “to live as an angel” – or at least [that such men] ... begin to know what it means to “live as angels”’.<sup>154</sup>

<sup>147</sup> Dodds, *Pagan and Christian*, pp. 33, 34, and 35.

<sup>148</sup> J. Gager, ‘Body Symbols and Social Reality: Resurrection, Incarnation and Asceticism in Early Christianity’ *Religion* 12 (1982), p. 345.

<sup>149</sup> Lucy Grig, ‘Torture and Truth in Late Antique Martyrology’, *Early Medieval Europe* 2: 4 (2002), p. 321, cited in Elena Martin *Iconic Women: Martyrdom and the Female Body in Early Christianity*, unpublished MA dissertation, Durham, 2006.

<sup>150</sup> Teresa M. Shaw, *The Burden of the Flesh: Fasting and Sexuality in Early Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1998), p. 20.

<sup>151</sup> Shaw also notes that this is common to many scholarly works, where, ‘one detects a general mistrust or discomfort with the physical realities of fast’. She cites Johannes Behm, ‘who manages to separate Jesus from any ascetic taint’. See Geoffrey W. Bromsley (ed.) and Johannes Behm in Gerhard Kittel (tr.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, 1967), 4. 924-35, cited Shaw, *The Burden*, p. 18.

<sup>152</sup> Richard Valantasis, *The Making of the Self: Ancient and Modern Asceticism* (Cambridge, 2008).

<sup>153</sup> Valantasis, *The Making of the Self*, ix.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

The concept of ‘living as an angel’ is well rooted in the writings of the Fathers – for example Basil of Caesarea, writing that angelic nature is ‘to be free from the yoke of marriage, not to be excited by any other reality, but to gaze intently on the divine face’.<sup>155</sup> The role of the hero as example to inspire the ‘ordinary’ Christian masses, albeit not without a touch of foreboding, is addressed by Peter Brown, who writes, ‘elite Christians following the ascetic path, saw Christian families admiring “Angelic” holy men, and young men growing up having ascetic heroes’.<sup>156</sup> Ascetics of either sex were ‘a living sign of the power of God placed among men’,<sup>157</sup> though to Christians less attuned to their distinctive spiritual message such ascetics were seen as exotic and intimidating, possibly part of some subversive movement.<sup>158</sup>

At the outset of the 1990s, the publication of R.A. Markus’ *The End of Ancient Christianity* raised the fundamental question, – ‘How much renunciation did being a Christian involve?’ and ‘How necessary, indeed, was asceticism to the Christian life at all?’.<sup>159</sup> Such questions beg others, leading to distinction between ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ Christians – a reoccurring subject throughout this study. These clumsy terms, ‘elite’ and ‘ordinary’ are better expressed by Teresa M. Shaw who writes of ‘ascetic Christians’ as ‘those who, by their physical renunciations, distinguish themselves from the wider Christian populace’.<sup>160</sup> Certainly, as Christopher Page asserts, around 200 A.D. the impression created by the generality of Christians would not seem to be perceived as unusually ascetic. Page cites the compiler of the *Letter to Diognetus* who insists that Christians do not ‘live life out of the ordinary’.<sup>161</sup> Having in mind any such implications regarding music which might be regarded as part of ‘ordinary life’, Page continues by citing the second-century satirist Lucian, ‘there is not a single ancient mystery cult without dancing’<sup>162</sup> and postulates that hymnody and dance (Page cites the choreographic hymnody in the *Acts of John*, touched on

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<sup>155</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Sermones ascetici* I: 2, tr. M. Monica Wagner, *St Basil: Ascetic Works*, The Fathers of the Church 9 (Washington, 1962), p. 209, PG XXXI: 873.

<sup>156</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 325.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323-4.

<sup>158</sup> That in Asia Minor Messalian monks gave rise to such suspicion, see Brown, *The Body*, p. 333.

<sup>159</sup> R.A. Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 40.

<sup>160</sup> Shaw, *The Burden*, p. 6.

<sup>161</sup> *Letter to Diognetus*, Page, *The Christian West* p. 45.

<sup>162</sup> Lucian, Page, *Christian West*, p. 44.

elsewhere in this study<sup>163</sup>) were not unusual in early Christian worship, indeed may have been sung and danced openly and not in a clandestine manner.<sup>164</sup> Whilst an ascetic elite were to initiate a culture of chanted psalmody whose highest achievements would extend beyond the time period examined here – for ‘ordinary’ members of divergent groups of Christians, there were, as Christopher Page writes, ‘probably as many varieties of Christian music and performance in the first two centuries as there were competing groups who claimed the name “Christian”’.<sup>165</sup>

The conflicting pressures within early Christianity, of an increasing commitment to the ascetic life, and in contrast, clearly discernable anti-ascetic attitudes (for example the claim of Jovinian that ‘Our religion has invented a new dogma against nature’<sup>166</sup>), significantly influenced perceptions of what might be legitimately and beneficially engaged in, and what, in the life of a Christian, must be renounced. Music, especially instrumental music, being closely associated with pagan worship, the theatre, and the immoral excesses which many Christian leaders attributed to pagan life, rendered musical activity high on the ‘hit list’ of suspect practices which warranted and attracted condemnation. As seen by some, music and dance were too closely allied to worldliness to be acceptable in the context of Christian worship. Asceticism was an uplifting antidote to the spiritually coarsening effect of worldly indulgence, enabling ‘the inward man to rise above earthly bonds and to be prepared for the wings of the Spirit’.<sup>167</sup> An ascetically inspired Christian elite publicly voiced their reservations about practical (as distinct from theoretical) music. The Christian[ized] masses, however, would seem to have clung to the musical practices with which they were familiar. Orientating their devotions towards Christ was one thing, jettisoning centuries old elements of entrenched popular culture was quite another. This is indicated in non-Christian comment, when, for example Celsus (ca. 185), in his multifaceted attack on Christianity, *On the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, substantiates the use of instrumental music in Christian worship – albeit in

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<sup>163</sup> In this instance albeit Gnostic.

<sup>164</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 44.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>166</sup> Jovinian, as cited by Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum libri ii*, 1: 41, PL 23: 282, cited David G. Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: the Jovinianist Controversy* (Oxford, 2007), p. 1.

<sup>167</sup> Henry Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford, 1976), p. 80.

a context which may be closer to popular religiosity than to asceticism. He claims that as a preliminary to the ceremonies, ‘they [the Christians] excite their hearers to the point of frenzy with flute music’.<sup>168</sup>

*The ‘reverse phenomenon’.*

Whilst the influence of asceticism – both in the sung psalmody it may be argued as fostering, and other forms of sung, played, or danced expressions of religiosity which it may be argued as suppressing – is immensely important to this study, an observable resistance to asceticism, not restricted to ‘ordinary’ Christians, should be noted. Waves of rigorous asceticism clearly influenced Christian practices from the earliest times, and by the late third – early fourth centuries these waves may have reached the level of a tsunami. This does not imply, however, that it may be safely assumed a blanket of ascetic practice was ‘rolled out’ over Christendom, so closely-woven as to necessarily contain all of those who professed some form of Christian belief. Balanced discussion requires ‘comparable attention to the reverse phenomenon ... the ways in which Christians questioned and challenged aspects of the ascetic ideal’.<sup>169</sup>

Prominent amongst voices resisting the ascetic tide, is that of Jovinian, who, as briefly cited above, proclaimed that Christianity was now advocating new and unnatural dogma.<sup>170</sup> But increasingly, the censure of ecclesiastical officialdom rose against him (Jovinian was condemned at synods in Rome and Milan in 393 A.D.), and popular Christian resistance to ascetics and asceticism<sup>171</sup> was hampered, if not eroded, by what David G. Hunter describes as the ‘gradual acceptance of ascetic piety among Christian aristocrats’ and ‘an ascetical hierarchy [inscribed] onto the structures of

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<sup>168</sup> Celsus, *On The True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians*, tr. R. Joseph Hoffman (Oxford, 1987), p. 71. Perhaps this should be seen as not totally at odds with the account of dancing at the Last Supper, as given in the Acts of John (discussed below) which, authentic or not, indicates the acceptability of music and dance at the time, and under the (Christianized Gnostic) circumstances of its composition – ‘I will play upon the flute, let all dance’. See M.R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1926), p. 253, and Louis E. Backman, *Religious Dance* (Westport, 1977 [1952]), p. 15.

<sup>169</sup> David Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy, and Heresy in Ancient Christianity: The Jovinian Controversy* (Oxford, 2004), vii.

<sup>170</sup> Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy*, p. 1. The writings of Jovinian, like those of other early ‘heretics’ have not survived in their entirety. In the instance of Jovinian benefit is derived from extracts preserved by Jerome in *Adversus Jovinianum libri*.

<sup>171</sup> Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy*, p. 3.

ecclesial authority'.<sup>172</sup> The arguments of Jovinian, refuted by such figures as Jerome and Ambrose, were declared 'a new heresy and blasphemy'<sup>173</sup> by Pope Siricius.<sup>174</sup>

Controversially, Jovinian not only argued that married life should be tolerated, but that married life was not inferior to the life of virginity. Furthermore, sexual renunciation being not the only form of ascetic practice, Jovinian also addresses other aspects of everyday life, which may be subjected to the renunciations of asceticism, arguing, for example, that eating with grateful thanks is not inferior to abstinence.<sup>175</sup> Within the context of such attitudes it would seem an unlikely speculation to assert any special negativity towards music and dance used in Christian worship. It could hardly be assumed that the many and varied supporters of Jovinian did not include a cross-section of the musically appreciative. Indeed Jerome confirms that Jovinian was not without supporters from all sectors of society:

You have in your army many underlings, you have dandies and foot-soldiers  
in your garrison: the fat, the neatly dressed, the elegant, the noisy orators  
who defend you with tooth and claw. The nobles make way for you in  
the street, the wealthy plant kisses on your head – for if you had not come,  
drunkards and gluttons would not have entered paradise!<sup>176</sup>

The norms of rhetorical exchange almost demanded that detractors marginalize and denigrate that of which they disapprove.<sup>177</sup> As Hunter comments, 'While Jerome

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<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>173</sup> Siricius, *Epistle*, Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy*, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> Though for Siricius the situation should be seen against the difficult background of 'men of unexamined life, who even had many wives, [who] boldly and freely aspire just as they please to the aforementioned ranks [bishop, priest, and deacon]. See Siricius, 'Letter to Bishop Himerius of Tarragona', Robert Somerville (tr.), *Prefaces to Canon Law Books in Latin Christianity* (Yale, 1998), pp. 42-3. Also that 'certain monks and nuns ... plunged into so much wantonness that they tangled themselves up in illicit and sacrilegious intercourse ... by abandonment of conscience they freely produced children with illicit partners' - Siricius, 'Letter', pp. 39-40. It is not suggested that such problems were unique to the pontificate of Siricius.

<sup>175</sup> It should be kept in mind that music and dance were not primarily objected to on the grounds of being non-ascetic, but because of their association with immorality, and pagan worship. There is no apparent indication that ascetics in Christian societies where music and dance seem not to be morally condemned – for example Ireland and Ethiopia (both are discussed elsewhere) – regarded the renunciation of music and dance as beneficial to spiritual progress.

<sup>176</sup> Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum libri 1.4*, Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy*, p. 72.

<sup>177</sup> Finn, *Asceticism*, p. 72.

accused them of moral decadence, his very vehemence underscored their prominence in the city and their claim to represent an alternative Christian Tradition'.<sup>178</sup>

In Edessa, Bardaisan (154–222 A.D.) argued that the marital act signified the purity, not impurity of the spouses.<sup>179</sup> What might be described as 'followers' of Bardaisan – 'Bardesanities' – who, a century later, 'in the time of Ephrem (306-373 A.D.) were a power of some importance', remained intact as a form of Christianity throughout the period of concern to this study to the extent that 'in the time of Jacob of Edessa (663-708 A.D.) there were still Bardesanities'.<sup>180</sup> Members of this Christian grouping may not have been totally out of their comfort zone following as founder, 'a courtier who did not despise the luxury of his day'<sup>181</sup> and where 'ascetic Christianity ... is in conflict with everything we know of Bardaisan'.<sup>182</sup> The cithara accompanied hymns of Bardaisan are discussed elsewhere.<sup>183</sup>

#### *Asceticism within the wider world.*

As discussed in chapter one of this study, the progress of Christianity was multi-directional – particular Christian cultures seeming to 'cross paths' with others, travelling in a different geographical direction. Thus the late sixth century, for example, sees Columba's mission to Scotland, whilst in Africa, Longinus evangelizes Soba, near the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile. Also at this time, Columbanus travels from Ireland on a journey taking him south to Bobbio in Italy, whilst Pope Gregory sends Augustine (later 'of Canterbury') north to 'England'. Sea-faring monks departing from the west coast of Ireland sailed to Iceland, Greenland, and possibly beyond, whilst Nestorian Christianity, well established along India's Malabar coast, made its way through the Middle East to China, where, in the late

<sup>178</sup> Hunter, *Marriage, Celibacy*, p. 73.

<sup>179</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers, *Bardaisan of Edessa* (Assen, 1966), pp. 190, 192 and 205.

<sup>180</sup> Drijvers, *Bardaisan*, pp. 198-9 and 228.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 210.

<sup>183</sup> See especially pp. 16, 112-3, 129.

630s, Chinese emperor T'ai Tsung found the Christianity which had 'come from afar' (with Persian missionary A-Lo-Pen) to be excellent and separate from the world'.<sup>184</sup>

It may well be that the Nestorians were not the first to Christianize that part of western and southern India accessible via normal trade routes – Egypt – Red Sea – Socotra<sup>185</sup> – Crananore – Mylapore, used at the start of the Common Era.<sup>186</sup> That early Common Era contact with Jewish communities on the Malabar coast resulted in Christian adaptation of the Jewish practice of 'kirtan'<sup>187</sup> – song about biblical personages, sung to instrumental accompaniment, and used as a means of religious instruction<sup>188</sup> – is maintained by Ezekel Barber.<sup>189</sup> Some of the ancient churches of India's Malabar coast, close to where tradition supposes Thomas to have landed in 52 A.D., claim an early date of foundation (Kuravilangadu, the site of which is traditionally dated at 105 A.D., and Champakulam at 427 A.D.). Whilst little is known of any evolving monasticism in the region, that a well established monastery existed in the sixth century is attested to by Gregory of Tours.<sup>190</sup> This was allegedly visited by a monk named Zadoe, who had travelled from Anbar before 363 A.D.<sup>191</sup>

That conversion of a nation can be the unintended consequence of a curtailed passage to India, via the Red Sea, is suggested by tradition concerning Frumentius and Aedesius. These early fourth century Christian missionaries, diverted to the African coast through lack of provisions<sup>192</sup> encountered and converted Ethiopic ruler, Ezana.<sup>193</sup> Ethiopia, one of the first countries to be declared officially Christian,<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> T'ai Tsung, edict of 638, Columba Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross* (London, 1957), p. 24.

<sup>185</sup> On this island being allegedly a site of early Christian settlement, see Valerian Plathottam, *The First Indian Saint* (Mannanam, 1990), p. 9.

<sup>186</sup> That a Roman merchant fleet of around a hundred ships regularly sailed this route, is stated in the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Bombay, 1884), p. 234.

<sup>187</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>188</sup> A practice vocally (at least) not out of kilter with Syriac Christianity, the hymns of which are discussed elsewhere in this study. See Sebastian P. Brock, *The Bible in the Syriac Tradition* (Kottayam, c. 1990), pp. 70-78.

<sup>189</sup> Ezekel Barber, *The Bene-Israel of India: Images and Reality* (Washington, 1981), pp. 14 and 75.

<sup>190</sup> Gregory of Tours, *In Gloria Martyrum* 31, in Gregory of Tours, tr. Raymond Van Dam, *Glory of the Martyrs* (Liverpool, 2004), p. 29.

<sup>191</sup> D'Souza, *In the Steps*, p. 34.

<sup>192</sup> Abuna Theophilos, *The Church of Ethiopia* (Addis Ababa, 1970), p. 4.

<sup>193</sup> See chapter one.



having ‘slept near a thousand years, forgetful of the world’<sup>195</sup> and having escaped European colonialism, would seem to have uniquely preserved much religious tradition (including the liturgical use of vocal and instrumental music and dance<sup>196</sup>) – to the benefit of the present day observer. Here can be seen a profusion of rock-hewn churches, some arguably dating from the fifth/sixth century (such as those of the Tigray region), and others (for example Lalibela) somewhat later. The church at Wusha Mikael in Addis Ababa, and to the north, that of St Mary of Zion claim to date in part to the third and fourth centuries respectively, whilst at least some of the twenty monasteries on the islands of Lake Tana (for example Tana Chierkos, ‘believed’ to have once housed – for a period of eight hundred years – the Ark of the Covenant) further contribute to a scene, historically, of committed religiosity. The late fifth century is alleged to have seen the arrival of the ‘Nine Saints’ from Syria. This would seem to be substantiated by the Garima Gospels, traditionally ascribed to one of the nine saints – Abba Garima. Recent (2000 and 2013<sup>197</sup>) radiocarbon dating by the Oxford University Research Laboratory for Archaeology, dates the Garima Gospels between 330-540 A.D., suggesting these may be the earliest illustrated Christian manuscripts extant. They are housed at the Abba Garima Monastery, at which, tradition has it, Garima arrived in 494 A.D., and just a few years before another of the nine is believed to have founded the Debre Damo monastery.

To the extent that Syriac Christianity would seem to blend asceticism, choirs, and (at least to the extent of the cithara) instrumental accompaniment,<sup>198</sup> that the emerging Ethiopian Christian culture seems to have been rich in music, dance, feasts, and fasts may be argued as unsurprising, given the Jewish and Syriac influences on a population for whom musical instruments – hit, blown, and plucked – were strong cultural elements. Any deductions concerning asceticism, or music in relation to asceticism, might be influenced by the characteristics of Ethiopia’s saints. A scene

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<sup>194</sup> See chapter one. The date of ‘adoption’ of Christianity in Ethiopia is generally given as 327 A.D. This falls short, of course, of anything approaching comprehensive conversion. See C. Oden, *How Africa Shaped the Christian Mind* (Illinois, 2007), p. 173.

<sup>195</sup> Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1857), p. 541.

<sup>196</sup> See chapters one and three.

<sup>197</sup> In conjunction with Ethiopian Heritage Fund and Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies 2013 conference, ‘Ethiopia and the Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity: The Garima Gospels in Context’.

<sup>198</sup> Discussed in chapter three.

inclusive of music can be inferred from the depictions of Yared (505-571),<sup>199</sup> possibly Ethiopia's most celebrated saint, with an orchestra of monks. As discussed in chapter one, Yared's instrumentally accompanied (sistrum, and drums of various sizes) compositions enjoyed a widespread appeal which appears to have survived the centuries.<sup>200</sup> That Yared's chants and hymns were used monastically<sup>201</sup> supports the argument that Ethiopian ascetic practice did not necessarily view instrumentally accompanied music as incompatible with the ascetic Christian life.<sup>202</sup> That the generality of Christians, clearly including those who are priests, vigorously immersed themselves in the drumming and dancing associated with the liturgy<sup>203</sup> would seem beyond doubt. As touched on in chapter three, particular solemn hymns, with plucked string accompaniment,<sup>204</sup> appear to have been reserved to Lent.

The geographically more remote areas of Christian worship (of which Ethiopia is but one) provide substantial strands of this thesis. Only when viewed very narrowly (for example 'in church', within the Roman empire) is argument disclaiming instrumental participation in early Christian worship, in any way tenable. The wider view extends to Christian communities beyond the Roman empire. Also, within the Roman empire, such a wider view takes account of places of Christian assembly not necessarily 'in church'. An example may be seen in outdoor vigils and processions which would encompass a broad spectrum of Christian worship, in terms of location, and content.<sup>205</sup> This might include the silent ascetic, the chanting ascetic – even the dancing ascetic. It would certainly include musical styles ranging from psalms in semi-spoken chant, to more melodically inventive psalmody – possibly accompanied by the lyre, cithara, or hydraulis. It would also include travelling Irish missionaries for whom the harp and multi-toned bells<sup>206</sup> seem to have been essential tools in the conversion of the pagans they encountered. At the noisier end of the spectrum it could be expected to embrace situations and locations displaying the popular piety of divergent cultures,

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<sup>199</sup> See chapter one, p. 23.

<sup>200</sup> Selassie, *Fuller Vision*, p. 146.

<sup>201</sup> Selassie, *Fuller Vision*, p/ 149.

<sup>202</sup> Ethiopian Christianity seems to have embraced a prodigious number of feasts, yet to have accepted the physical austerities of renunciation, with more than half the year gripped in obligatory fast.

Ullendorff, *The Ethiopians*, p. 106.

<sup>203</sup> See pp. 23-25.

<sup>204</sup> See discography.

<sup>205</sup> See chapter three, pp. 159-170.

<sup>206</sup> See chapter one, pp. 25-6.

where, as John Arthur Smith writes, ‘it seems highly likely that Christians in those wider spheres would have made use of the musical traditions of the local ambient religious cultures’.<sup>207</sup>

The extent of non-Christian ascetic practice in China during the first inroads of Christianity – and therefore the practices with which Christian missionaries would, negatively or positively, need to react – has only in recent years become the focus of scholarly attention.<sup>208</sup> The discussion in chapter one of this study, concerning the response of early Christian missionaries to the practices of music and dance encountered in the various religious groupings in China, might be seen as having a parallel in ascetic practice. Such ascetic practices would include the widespread performance of self-mortification in Chinese culture<sup>209</sup> – from third century A.D. blood-writing in the copying of religious texts, to the extremes of fifth century religious suicide by body burning.<sup>210</sup> Stephen Eskildsen makes clear in *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion* – the chronological focus of which, like this study, is the first six centuries of the Common Era – that the ‘Taoist ascetics were willing to deny themselves the most basic worldly needs and comforts for the sake of their religious perfection’.<sup>211</sup> Diversity of practice can also be noted in that the *Shenxian zhuan*, describing the lives of Divine Immortals who should be emulated. Here, we encounter the example of Pengzu, who reached the age of seven hundred and sixty-seven years old, outliving his forty-nine wives, and fifty-four children.<sup>212</sup> Pengzu maintains that none of life’s pleasures are harmful unless pursued excessively.<sup>213</sup> Such assumptions as the meagre available evidence might allow, suggest that music (vocal and instrumental) and dance, as discussed in chapters one and three of this study, appear to have been accepted components of non-Christian religious life, even for those whose monasticism implies acquaintance with the renunciations of asceticism. Certainly tradition has it that the mountainous region in which the Chinese female

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<sup>207</sup> Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 236.

<sup>208</sup> E.g. Stephen Eskildsen, *Asceticism in Early Taoist Religion* (New York, 1998).

<sup>209</sup> Jimmy Y. Yu, *Bodies of Sanctity: Ascetic Practices in Late Imperial China*, Dissertation prospectus, Princeton University, 2006. myweb.fsu.edu/jyuz/pdf/bodies accessed 25/4.13.

<sup>210</sup> Yu, *Bodies of Sanctity*, pp. 4, 9, and 18.

<sup>211</sup> Eskildsen, *Early Taoist Religion*, p. 13.

<sup>212</sup> *Tao Te Ching*, tr. D.C. Lau (London, 1963), p. 107.

<sup>213</sup> Eskildsen, *Early Taoist Religion*, p. 17.

ascetic Maonu lived, resounded with the music of harps and drums.<sup>214</sup> That earlier Taoists were ‘enlightened’ by the Christian Gospel;<sup>215</sup> is recorded in ‘Nestorian Monument’ of 781 A.D;<sup>216</sup> any attendant musical practices go unrecorded.

#### 4. Asceticism and musical practices.

Whatever the impact of any fourth century rise of asceticism, it is argued in this study that absence of adverse criticism confirms at least a toleration, by church leaders, of instrumental music in Christian worship throughout the first and second centuries.<sup>217</sup> The third century, as discussed elsewhere, sees the first written rebukes.<sup>218</sup> Whilst the Father’s own cultural heritage found acceptance in music as an academic discipline,<sup>219</sup> opposition to ‘pagan music in real life situations’<sup>220</sup> saw a hardening of attitudes concerning its role in sanctioned Christian worship. By the early fourth century, following the conversion of Constantine, the predominant influences on music in Christian worship would appear to emanate from conflicting polarities. On the one hand, ‘rhetorical masterpieces exchanged between members of a homogeneous elite’<sup>221</sup> define what is not permissible. On the other, ‘cradle’ Christians might seek the continuance of familiar musical practices, whilst their more recently Christianized neighbours regarded as permissible as much of their pre-Christian cultural baggage as they could carry.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the rise of monasticism, in part as a form of daily ascetic martyrdom replacing the bloody martyrdom of earlier periods of persecution, together with cathedral Offices which could flourish ‘in the benign climate created by the Edict of Milan,’<sup>222</sup> carried with it a rapid increase in the use of psalmody. It can,

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>215</sup> ‘Translation of the Nestorian Monument’, Cary-Elwes, *China and the Cross*, p. 278.

<sup>216</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>217</sup> Discussed earlier. This is described by Eric Werner, as ‘being tolerated, if not welcomed’. See Eric Werner, ‘Hellenism and Judaism in Christian Music’, *Hebrew Union College Annual* volume 20 (1947), pp. 407-470, especially p. 431.

<sup>218</sup> E.g. Tatian in the late second century, Tertullian and Arnobius in the third.

<sup>219</sup> Discussed in later chapters.

<sup>220</sup> *MECL*, p. 4.

<sup>221</sup> Elm, *Virgins of God*, p. 10.

<sup>222</sup> Smith, *Music in Ancient Judaism*, p. 206.

however, be argued that for a significant strand of ascetic thought, any spiritual value in dance or music – even the chanting of psalms – was outweighed by the greater value to be derived from its renunciation, and the dangers encountered in its use:

... [the true] brother does not sing, for singing stiffens and hardens the heart and does not permit the soul to experience katanyxis.<sup>[223]</sup> Thus, if you wish to achieve katanyxis, do not sing! ... My son, singing is a thing for people of the world ...<sup>224</sup>

Indeed 'It is possible, by the hearing of a song, without any notion or thought to commit a definite sin of impurity',<sup>225</sup> or to be 'brought down to the passions of the flesh by the pleasure of the song'.<sup>226</sup> However, despite such voices of opposition, the rise of asceticism is clearly entwined with the widespread use and consequent development of chant witnessed in the sung Office of monasteries, and the expanding churches and cathedrals of the Roman empire.

Favourable disposition towards sung worship can be noted in the singing of psalms as a regular ascetic tool.<sup>227</sup> Psalmody in the context of ordering the passions is discussed in chapter four of this study, but whilst considering psalmody as a restorative of balance, temperance, and harmony, the example of John the Dwarf, who after any form of worldly distraction 'gave himself to prayer, meditation and psalmody until his thoughts were re-established in their previous order'<sup>228</sup> may be not inappropriately noted, as may Cassian's comment, 'sometimes the beauty of the cantor's voice rouses the dull mind to a concentrated prayer',<sup>229</sup> or (Abba) Or, who 'spends his life with God ... praises him with ceaseless hymnody'.<sup>230</sup> Comment on Or continues, 'In the church one could see the vast numbers of monks who lived with him, robed in white

<sup>223</sup> Katanyxis – a realization both of wrong done and of God's love and healing forgiveness.

<sup>224</sup> John of Maiuma, *Plerophoria* (c. 515 A.D.), *MW*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>225</sup> John Climacus, *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*, Step 15, *PG* 897B-C given in Valantasis, *Making of the Self*, p. 161.

<sup>226</sup> Basil, *Homilia in psalmum* 1: 2, *MECL*, p. 66, *PG* XXIX, 213.

<sup>227</sup> *Coptic Manichaean Psalm-Book* II, Jason David BeDuhn, 'Manichaean Ritual', Richard Valantasis (ed.), *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice* (Princeton, 2000), p. 320.

<sup>228</sup> John the Dwarf, *Sayings*, p. 92.

<sup>229</sup> Cassian, *Conferences* 26, Owen Chadwick (ed.), *Western Asceticism* (Philadelphia, 1958), p. 227.

<sup>230</sup> Norman Russell (tr.), *The Lives of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo, 1981), p. 62.

like choirs of the just and praising God with ceaseless song'.<sup>231</sup> Whilst it is possible to identify instances where melodic inventiveness might incur ascetic condemnation,<sup>232</sup> chanted psalmody blended well with the ascetic life of the monastery. The musicality of psalmody was sufficient for Palladius (364-425), writing of the monastery at Nitria, in Lower Egypt, to state that 'the psalmody issuing from each cell ...[is such that the listener] imagines himself to be high above in paradise'.<sup>233</sup> That the Christianized masses, however, may have employed bolder, less subtle means of worship, expressed in music and dance forms unlikely to find favour with the Fathers, is (perhaps understatedly) brought to our attention by Christopher Page:

... The writings of the Church Fathers ... are sometimes open to the interpretation that the rank-and-file Christians did not view the use of [musical] instruments in worship in the same way as the bishops and other polemicists who harangued them on the subject.<sup>234</sup>

On balance, it may be argued that the growth of asceticism contributed to the evolution of liturgical singing – throughout the centuries discussed here, and beyond. Whilst the devotional significance of the prominence of psalmody in the fourth century onwards is clear, change in musical practice would seem to have occurred at a gentle pace.<sup>235</sup> For the less ascetic masses, whether in the light of their lukewarm conformity, or that of active resistance to the concepts of ascetic ecclesiastical authority, any disruption to the continuity of musical practices condemned by the Fathers appears no more than partial.<sup>236</sup>

That 'ordinary' Christians, including those not totally devoid of ascetic inclination, may have cultivated music and dance in a religious context is brought to our attention

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<sup>231</sup> Russell, *Desert Fathers*, p. 906.

<sup>232</sup> Discussed in chapter three.

<sup>233</sup> Palladius, *Lausiac History* 7, *MECL*, p. 59.

<sup>234</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 33. This is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>235</sup> Development of music (sung, played, or danced to), it might be noted in passing, by any measurement based on recent centuries (Palestrina to Boulez would be a time based equivalent) would seem gradual and unhurried. That this can be seen in the evolution of musical instruments is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>236</sup> As discussed elsewhere, canons throughout centuries of councils indicate the continuance of condemned musical practices.

by Page, citing the earliest named Christian singer, Gaios, mentioned in an epitaph believed to be of the third or fourth century, offering evidence of ‘a deacon of virginal temperance’ who requests the reader of his epitaph to ‘pour me a libation while lamenting, rejoicing once more in your wailing’. If such terminology as ‘lamenting’, ‘rejoicing’, and ‘wailing’ do not conjure scenes of music and dance, we are left in no doubt concerning the presence of music, and the importance of its high quality, Gaios being congratulated for producing ‘far the best hymns ... beautiful hymns from which others hereafter will tell even posterity to learn’.<sup>237</sup> That Christians, including ascetics, enjoyed music making in the company of their pagan friends attracts the comment of Robin Lane Fox. He brings to our attention that Christian hymns were so popular with pagans as to provoke the reproaches of the Fathers towards ‘celibate Christians who attend pagan parties and sing in choirs for their supper’.<sup>238</sup> Indeed Christians were urged to remain silent in villages where no Christians were present – so as to avoid being mistaken for travelling musicians.<sup>239</sup> This might be seen as indicating not only the willingness of Christians to parade their faith before their pagan associates, but the extent to which pagans ‘liked the rhythms and new vigour of the early Syrian hymn chants and found the virgin performers a fine after-dinner turn’.<sup>240</sup>

The ascetic life clearly stimulated a disposition conducive to the sung praises of psalms and hymns. It may be argued that the rise of asceticism boosted liturgical singing. The call to asceticism, however, whilst undoubtedly strong, seems not to have totally drowned out all opposition to its practices; nor did the directives of ascetically minded Church leaders ‘trickle down’ to the masses without some dilution. Whilst asceticism – certainly throughout the vast areas of Christendom under Roman domination – was sometimes wary of vocal music, and usually hostile to instrumental music and dance, beyond the Roman empire, forms of danced and instrumentally accompanied worship seem not to be unusual. The relationship of asceticism and music may oftentimes seem adversarial, but any emerging picture is permeated with sufficient diversity of attitude to render generalisation a rash pursuit. Within such

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<sup>237</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 45.

<sup>238</sup> Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 361 commenting on *On Virginity*, ascribed to Clement of Rome.

<sup>239</sup> Brown, *The Body*, p. 196.

<sup>240</sup> Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 361.

diversity, in the 'wider world' beyond the Roman empire, whether ascetics took the Gospel to India and China, pursued family life in those of Ireland's monastic settlements which catered for married monks, sailed 'the trackless sea', or preferred the calmer waters of Ethiopia's island monasteries, music and dance, in the main, would appear integral to Christian worship as a valid means of expressing and communicating devotion to Christ, and not, in all instances, necessarily to be regarded as 'anathema' to the ideals of asceticism.



### **Chapter three: Music in practice and theory.**

1. Practice and theory. 2. Psalms and hymns; voices and instruments; dances.
3. Occasions. 4. Conclusion.

#### **Practice and theory.**

This chapter seeks to locate the influence and role of musical instruments and dance in the thoughts and actions of ‘elite’ – in terms of education, worldly position, spiritual attainment – and the generality of ‘non-elite’ society during the early centuries of the Common Era. Clearly this involves a distinction between the philosophically/theologically based theoretical approaches to music, and the heard sounds of music in practice. The range of available voices, types of instrument, methods of learning and the retaining of musical repertoire are also discussed in this chapter. Geographically, the focus will be not only on cultures within the Roman empire, but also beyond – to regions already formulating, within the time-span of concern to this study, their own distinctive Christian traditions. Finally, this chapter reviews some of the occasions likely to generate musically or choreographically expressed devotional activity – whether as part of purely religious occasions, or, in the post-Constantinian Roman world, in the context of civic events with sufficient elements of Christian worship to engage our attention.

#### *The Liberal Arts.*

For the educated elite,<sup>1</sup> music is located within the ‘Liberal Arts’ – consisting of the ‘trivium’ of arts (grammar, logic, rhetoric) and the ‘quadrivium’<sup>2</sup> of sciences

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<sup>1</sup> From a literary schooling commencing around his eighth year, a child’s identity as a member of the elite might be inaugurated. Pupils being from either pagan or Christian families, an indication of competitiveness being no less apparent in the young Christian may be gleaned from the baptismal prayer of Eustathius, ‘Lord, give me the grace of good understanding, that I might learn letters and gain the upper hand over my fellows’, *vita Eutychii* 8, Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: The Grammarian and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1988), p. 11. The training received involved close attention to texts – annotating; analysing grammar, language and rhetorical strategies; elucidating their arguments.

(geometry, astronomy, arithmetic, and music). Each of these arts was perceived as a means by which one might ascend to a higher wisdom. Knowledge of a liberal art, whilst good, is only a beginning – a point of departure from the corporeal to the incorporeal. Study of the liberal arts were a preparation to comprehension of the truth.<sup>3</sup> From Pythagoras onwards, the concept of music as studied by theologian and philosopher alike (*musica speculative*, the province of the *musicus*), was seen as quite distinct from that of the performing musician – *cantus*.

Were the purpose of this study an appraisal of Greek music theory it would be incomplete without examination of the works of a litany of writers who were responsible for the creation of the elaborate theories which underpin much of what the western world identifies as the principal elements of music. Any such listing of music theorists would, of necessity, include such names as Pythagoras, Aristoxenus, Ptolemy, Gaudentius, Aristides Quintilianus, Alypius, etc. Indeed many studies do this, and are complemented by volumes of source readings, such as the Strunk, (later Strunk-Mathiesen/Strunk-McKinnon), McKinnon, Skeris, and Barker, compilations.<sup>4</sup> Since the purpose of this dissertation is to examine practical music – especially instrumental music – within a context of early Christian worship, the subject of Greek music theory can only be approached in a very selective way. The following paragraphs attempt to provide some intimation of the relationship of theoretical and practical music, and their possible location within religious attitudes, as demonstrated in the writings of the Fathers, as well as in the activities of the masses. Two areas are especially relevant to this study; firstly, traceable to the first Pythagoreans, some

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Amongst those shaped by the classical curriculum of the liberal arts, early Christian bishops clearly belonged to an educated elite. Whilst the generality of bishops were clearly dedicated to their efforts of guiding the moral and spiritual well-being of the masses, and in dispensing alms to the poor, a perceived gulf, in their thinking, separated the educated from the masses. Sidonius (430–486), bishop of Clermont for example, writes that ‘the educated are as far superior to the uncultured as human beings are to beasts’, Sidonius, *Epistle* 4: 172, Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, p. 91.

That study of the liberal arts is an elite male preserve is clear. Lactantius (d. 330 A.D.) writes, ‘Women are unable to learn all these subjects ... nor can the poor, or workmen, or peasants, since they must seek out their sustenance with their labour every day. This is the reason why Cicero said “Philosophy avoids the crowds”’, Lactantius, *The Divine Instructions* 3. 25; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 2:1.4., Mark Joyal, *Greek and Roman Education: A Sourcebook* (Abingdon, 2009), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup> On the coining of the term ‘quadrivium’ being attributed to Boethius, see Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy* (Oxford, 1981), xii, the source being Boethius’ *Training in Arithmetic* – ‘wisdom is conducted by the kind of study known as the quadrivium’, Joyal, *Greek and Roman Education*, p. 266.

<sup>3</sup> Paul M. Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* (London, 1963 [1941]), p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> See bibliography for full references.

awareness of the important place of music in the cosmos, and the consequent mathematical, arithmetical, geometric, and astronomic implications<sup>5</sup> on which any understanding might be based. Secondly, the degree to which the theoretical study of music and practical performance might be related. Considered here is the possibility that the relationship of Greek music theory to practical music in early Christian worship, might lie more in its contribution to the formation of attitudes towards music, rather than as a basis on which any music used in early Christian worship was created. Aristides Quintilianus, during the early centuries A.D.<sup>6</sup> writes:

Of the whole art of music, one certain part is called theoretical, the other practical. The theoretical is what discerns the technical rules of the art and the main categories and their parts and, moreover, examines its beginnings from on high, its natural causes, and its consonance with things as they are.<sup>7</sup>

### *Music of the spheres*

The Pythagoreans, so Aristotle informs us, found the ultimate reality and order of the cosmos in the harmony of the spheres:

[The Pythagoreans] were the first to take up mathematics. They thought its principles were the principles of all things ... in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being ... they saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers ... they supposed the elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Being the various manifestations of number; number as static quantity; number in static spatial relationships; number in moving spatial relationships respectively. Within the mathematical arts, music may be considered 'number as quantity in motion', Charles Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus* (Oxford, 2009), p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Dating Aristides Quintilianus is problematic. See introduction to this study.

<sup>7</sup> Aristides Quintilianus, tr. Thomas J. Mathiesen, *On Music in Three Books, Translation, Introduction, Commentary and Annotations* (Yale, 1983), p. 76.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle, *De caelo* 2: 9, tr. J. L. Stocks (Oxford, 1922).

Cosmic terrestrial connection is expressed in a symbolism of numbers, seen as the key to the universe, whose properties and influences are endless.<sup>9</sup> The proverbial ‘seven-stringed lyre’ shares this number with the seven planets, which in a Pythagorean system of astronomy, circle the earth in uniform movements, at set distances from one another. These are, from the most distant, – Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the sun, Venus, Mercury, and the moon. The ‘concord of tones separated by unequal but nevertheless carefully proportioned intervals caused by the rapid motion of the spheres ... [this sound] coming from the heavenly spheres revolving at very swift speed is of course so great that human ears cannot catch it’.<sup>10</sup> However, as Cicero informs us, ‘skilled men, imitating this harmony on stringed instruments and in singing’ can facilitate their return to heaven.<sup>11</sup> If the outermost sphere of fixed stars is added (which revolves the fastest and has the highest pitch) and the earth itself, which does not emit sound, the resulting total of nine coincides with the nine Muses, mythologically regarded as turning the spheres and thereby causing them to produce their different sounds.

The elements (air, earth, fire, and water) too, have musical representation. The ancient lyre of four strings, according to Boethius, employed this number in imitation of ‘the universal harmony which consists of four elements’.<sup>12</sup> The number four likewise encompasses the seasons, Pythagoras having taught, according to Aristides Quintilianus, that spring and autumn represent the musical interval of a fourth, winter a fifth, and summer an octave.<sup>13</sup> Theon of Smyrna (second century Neoplatonist) describes the Pythagoreans as regarding music as harmonizing opposites – reconciling disparate, potentially conflicting elements.<sup>14</sup> Boethius, at the turn of the sixth century, writes:

The world in constant change  
Maintains a harmony,

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<sup>9</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 198 echoing Macrobius, see footnote below.

<sup>10</sup> Cicero, *Scipio's Dream* v, William Harris Stahl, *Macrobius Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (Columbia, 1952), p. 74.

<sup>11</sup> Cicero, *Scipio's Dream* v, p. 74.

<sup>12</sup> Boethius, *Principles*, 1. 20, Calvin M. Bower, “*Boethius' The Principles of Music: An Introduction and Commentary*”, unpublished PhD dissertation, George Peabody College for Teachers, 1967, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica*, Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge Mass., 1972), p. 356. Burkert refers to Aristides Quintilianus, *De musica* 3, 19, tr. Thomas J. Mathiesen (New Haven, 1983), pp. 186-7.

<sup>14</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 19 citing Theon of Smyrna, *Mathematics Useful for Understanding Plato*.

And elements keep peace

Whose nature is to clash.<sup>15</sup>

The attraction of numbers as having a cosmic significance, supporting any human desire for order and revealing the principles of any such order, would seem to be rooted in ancient society. Walter Burkert writes of myth and ritual, whereby man attempts ‘to assure himself that, in spite of all confusion and all the immediate threats of his environment, everything is “in order”’. It is in such a pre-scientific conception of order that the idea of cosmic music has its roots’.<sup>16</sup>

The Pythagoreans’ concept of the ‘music of the spheres’, however, was not without its detractors. Whilst Aristides Quintilianus writes:-

These sounds are imperceptible to us (for the ears are not adapted to them ..)  
... but for the better of the superior beings who have lived among men,  
the sounds draw near hearing ... [but] unworthy men most especially  
are absolutely incapable of hearing the sound of the universe by accident,  
while serious and scientifically versed men – albeit rarely – do, in spite of all,  
partake abundantly of such an honor and well-being from the almighties.<sup>17</sup>

Aristotle, however, presents a different view:-

... the theory that the movement of the stars produces a harmony, i.e. that  
the sounds they make are concordant, in spite of the grace and originality  
with which it has been stated, is nevertheless untrue. Some thinkers suppose  
that the motion of bodies of that size must produce a noise ... all the stars,  
so great in number and in size, are moving with so rapid a motion, how should  
they not produce a sound immensely great? ... this music, they explain ... is  
in our ears from the very moment of birth and is thus indistinguishable from

<sup>15</sup> Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy* 2: 8, tr. V.E. Watts (London, 1998), p. 81

<sup>16</sup> Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (Cambridge Mass., 1972), p. 357.

<sup>17</sup> Aristides Quintilianus, tr. Mathiesen, *On Music*, p. 189.

its contrary silence ... [like] what happens to coppersmiths, who are so accustomed to the noise of the smithy that it makes no difference to them ... it cannot be a true account of the facts ... sound is caused when a moving body is enclosed in an unmoved body, and cannot be caused by one in, and continuous with a moving body which creates no friction.<sup>18</sup>

In the second century A.D., Sextus Empiricus refuted arguments ‘that the cosmos is ordered in accord with Harmonia [musical scales/intervals]’ declaring that it ‘is shown to be false in various ways’,<sup>19</sup> but without elaborating on the ‘various ways’ he has in mind. Despite the detractors, belief in the harmony of the spheres did not prove incompatible with the formulations of Christianity. Looking back from some two hundred years beyond the time remit of this study, Regino of Prum (c. 900 A.D.) was to write ‘not only the pagan philosophers but also the reliable teachers of the Christian faith confirm the celestial harmony’.<sup>20</sup>

### *Theorists and practitioners.*

Music theory relates to the celestial harmony resulting from the mathematical order of the universe, rather than being a structure to facilitate practically performed music. Henry Chadwick writes of the Platonic tradition regarding music theory ‘not so much as a route to the better appreciation of the latest composition in the Lydian mode but rather to the mathematical design and order pervading the universe’.<sup>21</sup> Rhythmics and metrics are seen as a means of identifying the mathematical proportions with which the universe is imbued. As the contemporary musicologist, Jeremy S. Begbie writes:

‘Music finds its ideal form in the intellectual knowledge of the numerical character of the universe ... the numbers of music derive from the unchanging order of “external numbers” which themselves proceed from God ... [music] can assist the soul’s ascent

<sup>18</sup> Aristotle, *De caelo* 2: 9, tr. J.L. Stocks (Oxford, 1922).

<sup>19</sup> Sextus Empiricus, tr. Denise Davidson Greaves, *Against the Musicians* (Nebraska, 1986), p. 155.

<sup>20</sup> Regino of Prum, letter to Archbishop Rathbod of Treves, cited Kathi Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death: Studies in Musical Iconology* (Princeton, 1970), p. 350.

<sup>21</sup> Henry Chadwick, *Tradition and Exploration: Collected Papers on Theology and the Church* (Norwich, 1994), p. 208.

under the trace of God from the realm of sense to the eternal realm of perfect number, and thus to God'.<sup>22</sup>

Whilst residing in the physical world of the senses, music, like mathematics, is an abstraction whose real beauty is independent of melody communicated to the ear.<sup>23</sup> Although 'Numbers' become accessible to the ear through music, practical musical performance is certainly not the prime interest of music theorists. In Boethius' *The Principles of Music*, written in the early sixth century, but reflecting earlier Greek writers, the practical musician does not fare too well:

Mere physical skill serves as a slave ... how much nobler is the study of music as a rational science than as a laborious skill ... that person is a musician who, by careful rational contemplation, has gained the knowledge of making music, not through slavery of labor, but through the sovereignty of reason ... the type which buries itself in instruments is separated from the understanding of musical knowledge.<sup>24</sup>

In practical music, too, the higher appreciation is intellectual. Listening is therefore preferable to playing oneself, – 'it is much better and nobler to know about what someone else is doing ... nobler to the degree that the mind is nobler than the body'.<sup>25</sup>

Augustine, writing a century earlier, questions (at least within the context of his early work, *De musica*), the presence of art or science in the performance of practical music:

But do you think it ought to be called an art even if they do it by a sort of imitation?

... if all pipers, flute players, and others of this kind have science, then

<sup>22</sup> Jeremy S. Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 81 and 82.

<sup>23</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> Boethius, *The Principles*, I: 34, tr. Bower, *Boethius' 'The Principles'*, pp. 102, 102-3, 103 respectively.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

I think there is no more degraded and abject discipline than this one.

... if the rapid and readier motion of the fingers were to be attributed to science, the more science anyone had the more he would excel in the rapidity of the motion.

... when he blows on the flute, and can note and commit to memory what he decides sounds well enough ... and the joints, already subdued and prepared by practice, follow memory ... the better and more he excels in all these things which reason just now taught us we have in common with the beasts: that is the desire of imitating, sense, and memory.<sup>[26]</sup>

For I don't believe there is any way of finding a man on the stage who loves his art for itself ... [all] conceive the end of their profession in terms of money and glory.<sup>[27]</sup><sup>28</sup>

But although Augustine can write so disparagingly about the performance of practical music, he could also be enthralled by it. There is more than a hint of this when he writes that there are 'many for whom happiness consists in the music of voices and strings, and who count themselves miserable when music is lacking in their lives'.<sup>29</sup> The dilemma is most acute when music is associated with Christian worship. Augustine's struggle with emotion when hearing well sung hymns and psalms is touched on elsewhere in this study. Perhaps Henry Chadwick's short phrase describing Augustine's view of music in worship, is very apt, – 'indispensable but dangerous'.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Augustine's comments on imitating (which is really a manifestation of memory), sense, and memory, recalls Aristoxenus, 'For the apprehension of music depends on these two faculties, sense-perception and memory', Aristoxenus, *Harmonics*, tr. Henry Stewart Macran (Oxford, 1974 [1902]), II, 38, p. 193.

<sup>27</sup> Augustine is harder on performers than Plato, who, some seven centuries earlier, had conceded that singers 'give themselves harmless pleasure from their own performance'. See Plato, *Laws* 2: 670, tr. Trevor J. Saunders (London, 1970), p. 111.

<sup>28</sup> Augustine, *On Music*, tr. Robert Catesby Taliaferro, *The Fathers of the Church* (New York, 1947), 4, pp. 178, 180-1, 182, 183, 187 respectively.

<sup>29</sup> Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*, 2: 13 tr. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis, 1993), p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> Chadwick, *Tradition and Exploration*, p. 208.



It should also be noted, however, that practical musicians were not alone in facing the denigration of their skills. Practical medical skill was also regarded as of a lower order than theoretical – ‘For I am always hearing how doctors, very learned men, in the matter of amputating or binding limbs, are often surpassed by less clever men in their use of the hand or knife. And this kind of curing they call surgery’.<sup>31</sup> A cloud of ‘elitist’ theoretical disparagement can be observed as descending on those who work to acquire practical skills,<sup>32</sup> especially if those skills are directed towards financial ends. That such menial types as practical ‘musicians’ should occupy some place in a subject whose theory ‘is akin to metaphysics’ or that the subject of music is related to actual sound is, for ancient theorists, almost an embarrassment’.<sup>33</sup> The precedence accorded the theoretical speculations of the *musicus* over practical performing ability, had long contributed to the lower status of the executant musician.<sup>34</sup> Whilst the highly developed musical skills of professional vocalists and instrumentalists of Antiquity are well recorded, a cultural chasm divides scholars of music theory from performers. Although the Fathers of the early Christian Church might be seen as being at one with the philosophical exponents of celestial harmony, condemnation of professional musicians<sup>35</sup> was, for the most part uncompromising.

Practical music all too easily becomes sensual – a perversion of its true uplifting purpose. As Jamie James puts it, ‘serious thinkers ... considered the sensual delight of musical performance to have the same relationship to the ideal nature of music that sex had to love in Christianity’.<sup>36</sup> The citizens of the Republic, Plato tells us, ‘ought not to seek for that [music] which is pleasant’, so ‘when someone says that music is

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<sup>31</sup> Augustine, *On Music* 4, tr. Taliaferro, *The Fathers* 4, p. 183.

<sup>32</sup> That negative attitudes of the elite, concerning the slavish drudgery which contributed to the expert proficiency of the ‘professional’ musician, is apparent beyond the time frame of Antiquity is illustrated anecdotally by Georges Dubourg, who writes of a gentleman ‘of a noble family’ who being reprimanded over his lack of concern for rhythmic accuracy responded ‘It may be necessary for *you*, who get your living by it, to mind these trifles; but *I* don’t want to be so exact!’. Georges Dubourg, *The Violin* (London, 1837), p. 316.

<sup>33</sup> Henry Chadwick, *Tradition and Exploration*, p. 208.

<sup>34</sup> Walter Salmen, *The Social Status of the Professional Musician from the Middle Ages to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York, 1983), p. 18.

<sup>35</sup> Within such terminology may be included musicians who were slaves, at least insofar as their sustenance might be said to depend on the performance of their (sometimes musical) duties.

<sup>36</sup> Jamie James, *The Music of the Spheres* (London, 1994), p. 4.

judged by the criterion of pleasure, we should reject his argument, out of hand'.<sup>37</sup> As later comment on Plato's *Republic*, by the twelfth century Arab philosopher Averroes, was to express it:

There is nothing at all in common between a sound mind and pleasure ... because pleasure throws a sharp-minded man into a perplexity resembling a madman's ... the musical one ... should desire only the beautiful with self-control ... This is the end at which the activity of music aims.<sup>38</sup>

A highly moralistic view of music seems to resonate among the Fathers. As touched on above, it would also seem that Pythagorean concepts of cosmic harmony could prove adaptable. Clement, for example, like so many of the early church Fathers who converted from paganism, was possessed of a convert's zeal. On the one hand he ridicules Greek myths concerning music, especially legends about Orpheus.<sup>39</sup> Yet on the other hand proffers, in Christian clothing, what is essentially Pythagorean philosophy, stating that it is the proclamation of Christianity 'which composed the entire creation into melodious order, and tuned into concert the discord of the elements, that the whole universe might be in harmony with it'.<sup>40</sup>

Within any examination of the 'practice and theory' of music in the early Christian world, interpretation of the activities of the classic Greek mythological figure of Orpheus may be regarded as illustrative of the divide between the role of the music theorist and the music practitioner. Such a divide identifies the spiritually and intellectually elevated position of the music theorist, contrasted with the more earthly (and potentially sinful) environment stimulated by the persuasive sounds created by the skilled practitioner musician. Orpheus can be associated with practical music making if the myth of Orpheus and Euridice is read as depicting him failing in his attempt to free Euridice from Hades, as Mayer-Baer puts it, 'because he was only a kithara player and did not know the theory of music, which would have enabled him

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<sup>37</sup> Plato, *Laws* 2: 668, tr. Saunders, p. 108.

<sup>38</sup> Averroes, commentary on Plato's *Republic*, cited James, *The Music*, p. 59.

<sup>39</sup> For example, early in chapter one of *Exhortation to the Heathen* (ANF 2, p. 171), he writes, 'How, let me ask, have you believed vain fables, and supposed animals to be charmed by music'.

<sup>40</sup> Clement, *Exhortation to the Heathen*, ANF 2, p. 172.

to cope with the cosmic powers'.<sup>41</sup> In early Christian ideology, the alluring musical practices of Orpheus, whose 'success was not based on the theoretical knowledge of the music of the spheres, but on the power of music to enchant the soul'<sup>42</sup> were transferred on to the contrasting figures, Christ and Satan, and the abode of the soul in the afterlife became the opposite realms of heaven and hell.<sup>43</sup> As examples of early Christian art depict, Orpheus was replaced by Christ the musician,<sup>44</sup> a figure which acquired a new meaning, – that of the spheres of the cosmos harmonized by the harmony of His lyre.<sup>45</sup> As Paulinus of Nola (c.353-431 A.D.) expresses it:

But our only skill is our faith, our only music Christ  
 Who showed that a wonderful concord of unbalanced harmony  
 Was of old achieved in himself ...  
 And he himself hung his lyre upon the tree of wood,  
 To repair it by means of the cross which destroyed the sin of the flesh.  
 ... Christ's golden lyre echoed throughout the world  
 Producing one melody out of innumerable tongues,  
 While the new songs respond to God with matching strings.<sup>46</sup>

Meanwhile, the alluring strains of Orpheus' lyre, mythologically capable of taming wild beasts, and of luring people into sin and eternal death, was, by the Fathers, allied to Satan.<sup>47</sup> Thus, theoretical music, which had a place among the highest philosophical concepts, was far removed from music which could be heard, whether produced by amateur or professional musicians.

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<sup>41</sup> Kathi Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres and the Dance of Death: Studies in Musical Iconology* (Princeton, 1970), p. 77.

<sup>42</sup> Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres*, p. 247.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 221-2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261, and later examples of Christ the musician, pp. 314 and 320.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>46</sup> Paulinus of Nola, Poem 20, 32-5; 52-3; 59-62, Carolinne White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London, 2000), p. 63.

<sup>47</sup> Meyer-Baer, *Music of the Spheres*, p. 339.

*Professional and amateur musicians.*

If, in early Christian assemblies, the persuasive power of music was deemed to have any role in the context of worship, any participation of instrumental musicians, or indeed skilled singers, is clearly dependant on their availability. The position may not have been as stark as that described by Edward Foley, who claims that the earliest Christianity knew ‘non-professional, lay leadership – not the professional musicians and clergy who dominated the Temple’.<sup>48</sup> Contrasting speculation maintains the enlistment of ‘musicians who had received their education in Jewish musical practice and who introduced their art in the new Christian liturgy’.<sup>49</sup> Many professional musicians, however, were likely to be itinerant, and (leaving aside, for a moment, the reprehensible morality which may have been attached to them<sup>50</sup>), therefore not easily integrated within a worshipping community. Certainly professional musicians associated with the theatre would find it next to impossible to combine compliance with the Church’s canons and their work. Canon twelve, of the late fourth century *Canons of Hippolytus* condemns, amongst others, those who perform in the theatre or teach music, whilst the *Apostolic Constitutions* (viii 31. 9) insists that the professional musician who is ‘a flutist or a citharist or a lyrist or a public dancer ... shall either discontinue these things or be turned away’.<sup>51</sup> The close link between immorality and professional musicians and dancers (and actors, though not the focus of this study),

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<sup>48</sup> Edward Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music: The Music of Pre-Constantinian Christianity* (Nottingham, 1992), p. 49.

<sup>49</sup> Lang, *Music in Western Civilization*, p. 51.

<sup>50</sup> The first Christian work to condemn the kithara because of its association with immoral women, is Arnobius (d. c. 330), *Adversus nations* (written c. 303-10 as given in *MECL*). In attributing the attitude of Arnobius to ‘the sensitivity of third and fourth century Christianity in the area of sexual morality’ (McKinnon, *Church Fathers*, p. 166) McKinnon is criticized by Skeris, claiming that McKinnon ‘grossly overinterprets’ this attitude and ‘fails to give due consideration to the legal tradition’ (Robert A. Skeris, Chroma Theou: *On the origins and theological interpretation of the musical imagery used by the ecclesiastical writers of the first three centuries, with special reference to the image of Orpheus*, Altotting, 1976, p. 130) regarding persons who exercised a shameful occupation, the *infamia*. Whilst the evolution of penalties incurred by ‘excommunication’ has sufficient similarity to *infamia* imposed restrictions to speculate (though beyond the remit of this study to do so) that the influence of the latter on the former was considerable (e.g. forfeiture of rights, ostracism), it may be more justifiable to highlight the importance of legal tradition regarding persons in dubious occupation (A.H. J. Greenidge, *Infamia: Its Place in Roman Public and Private Law*, Oxford 1894, especially pp. 18-40 and concerning women, 170-76), than to suggest any ‘over interpretation’ by McKinnon regarding sensitivity in the area of sexual morality.

<sup>51</sup> *Didascalia* VIII 32/9, Skeris, Chroma Theou, p. 34. That the Church’s struggle against theatre music proved to be ongoing, suggests less than whole hearted compliance with its rulings, Johannes Quasten, ‘Christianity and Theatre Music’, *Music and Worship in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Washington, 1983 [1973]), pp. 135-7.

combined with the itinerant life led by some performers, rendered unlikely their participation in public worship. Yet the repeated condemnation of those members of church communities (frequently cantors) who played the cithara, or some other instrument, would suggest ongoing skirmishes to banish such activity from church worship. Reference to a cantor 'who learns to play the cithara'<sup>52</sup> begs questions as to whether those who instructed any cantors who learned to play the cithara were Christians, and whether they earned their livelihood from playing and teaching. Some intimation of the continuing conflict surrounding cantors/musical instruments may be seen in the later (c. 830 A.D.) *De Ecclesiasticis officiis* which, in stating 'Our cantors hold in their hands neither cymbals, lyres, nor any other type of instrument'<sup>53</sup> clearly distinguishes between the practices of 'our cantors' and the cantors of some other place, or of a previous time.<sup>54</sup>

The canons of early councils, synods, and constitutions were unambiguous in their demands, even if the frequent repetition of such directives suggests a lack of whole hearted compliance. The *Canons of Hippolytus*, dating from the late fourth century, state 'whoever performs in a theatre or is ... a music teacher ... none of these may be permitted to attend a sermon until they have been purified from these unclean works. After forty days they may hear a sermon'.<sup>55</sup> The slightly later *Canons of Basil* insist that 'If anyone is a chorus dancer he shall either give up his profession or be excommunicated and banned from the mysteries ... [a woman who] allures people by her beautiful singing and her deceitful melody ... shall, if she renounces her profession, wait forty days before she communicates'.<sup>56</sup> That such directives concerning musicians did not entirely correct the situation is strongly suggested by later canons attempting to enforce the same prohibitions. A half millennium beyond the period of prime concern to this study, canon 70 of Gabriel ben Turiek, condemns use of the cithara<sup>57</sup> and the late twelfth century *Nomocanon* of Michael of Damietta

<sup>52</sup> C. 74, *Canons of Basil*, *MECL*, p. 120.

<sup>53</sup> Amalar (bishop of Metz), *De Ecclesiasticis officiis*, Giulio Cattin, *Music of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 155.

<sup>54</sup> Further examples of the ongoing conflict surrounding the use of musical instruments in worship may be seen in the official suppression decreed at later Councils such as those of Trier (1227), Lyons (1274), and Vienna (1311), Cattin, *Music in the Middle Ages*, p. 155.

<sup>55</sup> *MW*, p. 127.

<sup>56</sup> *Canons of Basil*, c. 37, *MECL*, p. 119.

<sup>57</sup> *MW*, p. 128, citing W. Riedel, *Die kirchenrechtsquellen* (Leipzig, 1900), p. 63.

reiterates yet again that if ‘anyone plays a cithara or an instrument which is blown he shall either cease or be cast out’.<sup>58</sup>

If musicians – especially professional musicians – were held in derision by the Fathers, ‘professionalism’ was not. As noted elsewhere in this study, constructive comment by early Christian writers, on improving the quality of devotional singing,<sup>59</sup> far outweighs that which claims singing to have no place in worship. Vocal ornamentation evolved, un-purged of emotion, in the *jubilus* – a prolonged and decorative singing of the final ‘a’ of ‘alleluia’. Of the *jubilus*, Schueller writes:

A melismatic [group of notes sung to one syllable] decoration, it was one of the first musical forms adopted by Christianity that stood in direct opposition to the requirements, established by the early Church for the dominance in the chant of the text. Its indulgence in tone, as it were, was in contrast to the accepted ascetic ideal.<sup>60</sup>

According to Pseudo-Jerome:

It is called Jubilus, because neither by words, nor syllables, nor letters, nor voice, can it be expressed or comprehended how much man ought to praise God.<sup>61</sup>

Arguably, such fervent and unbounded praise might be regarded as difficult terrain by Fathers fearful of the potential dangers of ecstatic journeying via (all but wordless) music. As is examined later, elaboration in the singing of the *jubilus* might be argued as the point of conception from which musical emotional experience could commence. Augustine, who frequently expressed wariness of being enthralled by music, writes of the *jubilus*:-

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<sup>58</sup> *MW*, p. 128.

<sup>59</sup> Isidore of Seville, for example, writes ‘To the psalmist belongs the duty of singing, .. and whatever pertains to the skill of singing ... the order and way of chanting in the choir in accordance with the solemnity and the time’, *The Letters of St Isidore of Seville*, tr Gordon B. Ford Jr. (Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 11 and 15.

<sup>60</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 227.

<sup>61</sup> Pseudo-Jerome, *Brevarium in psalmos xxxii*, *MECL*, p. 140.

It is rather a sort of sound of joy without words, since it is the voice of a soul poured out in joy and expressing, as best it can, the feeling, though not grasping the sense.<sup>62</sup>

Whilst Synesius of Cyrene delighted in his ‘newly-devised harmonies to strike the cithara strings’,<sup>63</sup> even within the churches of the Mediterranean world, dancing seems not to have been totally exiled from liturgical performance.<sup>64</sup> Whether as a leisure pursuit, or aid to devotion, though professional musicians might be the subjects of disapproval, their employment seems to have retained some favour. Even ‘Christian virgins’ so Augustine bemoans, ‘engage masters, to teach them to sing and to play’.<sup>65</sup>

### *Teaching and learning.*

From Plato we learn that *kitharistes*, giving tuition in kithara playing,<sup>66</sup> instructed in rhythm and harmoniai,<sup>67</sup> but it is not stated whether such instructors were to any extent versed in the use of written systems of musical notation, as integral to the preparation of practical performance. Mathiesen suggests that:

... several systems of notation existed during the period between

<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *In psalmum xcix* 4, *MECL*, p. 158.

<sup>63</sup> Synesius of Cyrene, *Hymn* vii, 1: 5 and 5, *MECL*, p. 56. McKinnon concedes that this ‘could be taken to suggest that the hymns were actually recited to instrumental accompaniment’ – *MECL*, p. 56. Of Ephrem, McKinnon comments on the plausibility of hymn teaching being assisted by the use of the cithara – *MECL*, p. 92.

<sup>64</sup> Some intimation of this may be deduced from Isidore of Seville’s commission to compose such dances. See later in this chapter.

<sup>65</sup> Augustine, quoted Walter Sorell, *The Dance Through the Ages* (London, 1967), p. 36.

<sup>66</sup> Plato, in the voice of Socrates, mentions Connus as his kithara teacher. See Plato, *Euthdemus*, tr. W.R.M. Lamb (Cambridge, Mass., 1924), p. 383.

<sup>67</sup> The term *harmoniai* is frequently encountered in writers on music, but not always with precisely the same meaning. As Robert W. Wallace writes. ‘the nature of the Classical *harmoniai* is both obscure and controversial’ (see Robert W. Wallace, ‘Performing Damon’s *harmoniai*’ in Stefan Hagel and Christine Harrauer (eds.), *Ancient Greek Music in Performance* (Vienna, 2005), p. 147). It most usually relates to the sequence of notes within the octave of a particular mode or modes, e.g. Mixolydian, Lydian, and in this context a modern equivalent term might be scale or scales. The term *harmoniai* can, however, simply refer to ‘music’ generally. In later writers – Aristoxenus onwards (c. 375/360 - after 320 B.C.) – the term can be used to signify the Enharmonic genus (see later on this chapter; see also Michaelides, *Ancient Greece*, pp. 127-9). The term is also used to describe the sequence of notes (sounds) believed by Pythagoreans to be produced by the revolving planets (as touched on elsewhere in this chapter), which creates the ‘Harmonia of the Spheres’.

the fourth century B.C.E. and the fourth century C.E. Falling in the province of the practitioner rather than the theorist, musical notation must have been developed and passed on as a skill together with other details of instrumental technique and performance practice.<sup>68</sup>

Whilst Maas and Snyder remain noncommittal, writing ‘Of the actual procedures followed in teaching the instrument, however, the ancient sources provide no details, and we can only conjecture’,<sup>69</sup> Comotti maintains that ‘the use of notation never spread outside the narrow circle of professional actors and musicians’<sup>70</sup> leaving others (an implied majority) dependant on learning by non-written means.

Just as today, some form of keyboard is of value to the choir director at the early stages of teaching new music, so, during the time period of concern to this study, could musical instrument support be argued as a valuable aid to learning. That Ephraem the Syrian allegedly ‘himself founded choirs of consecrated virgins, taught them the hymns and responses ... was in their midst as their father and citharist of the Holy Spirit, and he taught them music and the laws of song’,<sup>71</sup> would seem to have a choir director resonance. Indeed Ephraem’s biographer, Jacob of Serug (c. 451 – c. 521) describes Ephraem accompanying his choir on the cithara in church, on Festivals and Sundays.<sup>72</sup> It is conceded by McKinnon that ‘the notion that Ephraem was a typical participant in the Greek and Latin patristic polemic against pagan musical practice and instruments must be questioned ... the biographical tradition that Ephraem trained choirs of virgins and boys to sing his hymns ... remains plausible enough; and that he employed a cithara in doing so, not out of the question’.<sup>73</sup> A further example of teaching singing with the aid of the cithara occurs in the *Acta*

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas J. Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Nebraska, 1999), p. 606.

<sup>69</sup> Martha Maas and Jane McIntosh Snyder, *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece* (Yale, 1989), p. 167.

<sup>70</sup> Giovanni Comotti, *Music in Greek and Roman culture* (Baltimore, 1979), p. 41.

<sup>71</sup> J.S. Assemani, *Biblioteca orientalis* pp 47-8, Rebecca J. Rollins, ‘The Singing of Women in Early Christian Worship’, *Music in Performance and Society: Essays in honor of Roland Jackson*, p. 52. This passage, taken from Jacob of Serug, *Acta Martyrum et Sanctorum*, III, is also given in Werner, *Sacred Bridge*, p. 218, but in a form which omits reference to the Holy Spirit as appended to citharist.

<sup>72</sup> Eric Werner, *Sacred Bridge I* (London, 1959), p. 218.

<sup>73</sup> *MECL*, p. 92.



*Ephraemi*, ‘a group of boys came to Bardesanes, these he taught to sing to the cithara’.<sup>74</sup> A somewhat later example, in 812, is that of Charlemagne receiving an organ, complete with players, as a gift from Michael I. This was to assist the teaching of Plainchant.<sup>75</sup> Just as this practical consideration brought about use of the organ in the teaching of plainchant, and the levitical musicians used musical instruments ‘without which a precise intonation was not possible’,<sup>76</sup> it could be strongly argued that musical instruments were employed in imparting and transmitting musical concepts in the early centuries of Christian worship. Any extent to which forms of written notation, or the hand signals of chironomy, were relevant to learning, teaching, or performing, is addressed below.

### *Notation.*

This dissertation is not primarily a study addressing the evolution of early notation. Much has been written on the subject, but, as Andrew Barker wrote in 1984, ‘though the centuries have seen the spilling of much scholarly ink, and many imaginative musical reconstructions, we are still far from achieving an adequate understanding’.<sup>77</sup> J. Murray Barbour wrote, some twenty years earlier, ‘informed writers have often become exasperated with what they consider the absurdities and inconsistencies of the notation system’.<sup>78</sup> This echoes the comment of Curt Sachs concerning the ‘unbelievable ... tangle of Greek systems, scales, keys, and modes’.<sup>79</sup>

To the mid-twentieth century scholarship of Curt Sachs *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West* (1943), referred to above, and the slightly later *Les gammes musicales* of Antoine Auda (1947), the past sixty years has seen the addition of several important studies which together represent a comprehensive and in depth examination of the subject of notation. The first, in 1978 [in English, not until 1991], *The Music of the Bible Revealed*, by Suzanne Haik-Vantoura, might be seen as a trifle

<sup>74</sup> *Acta Ephraemi*, in *Ephraemi Syri, Opera Omnia* 3, MW, p. 91.

<sup>75</sup> E.T. Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography* (Oxford, 1961), p. 108.

<sup>76</sup> Alfred Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York, 1969), p. 212.

<sup>77</sup> Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writing: 1 The Musician and His Art* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> J. Murray Barbour, ‘The Principles of Greek Notation’, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XIII (1960), p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West* (New York, 2008 [1943]).

imaginative, in that gaps in what is known are filled by personal conjecture of an authoritative kind concerning what might have been. Doubtless the desire to indicate how modern performance might recreate the sounds of two/three thousand years ago has spurred such conjecture, written, as much of her material was, in the twenty or so years prior to the book's publication - an era that prefaced an enlivened enthusiasm for 'authentic' performance. More recent years have seen the appearance of Warren D. Anderson's *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (1994) and in 1999, *Apollo's Lyre: Greek Music and Music Theory in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* by Thomas J. Mathiesen, which presents a particularly detailed study of the subject, whether measured by breadth, depth, or assemblage of hard factual information. Whilst notation forms only a part of these works, that part is weighty scholarship, and would seem to encapsulate the known, and to provide the necessary speculation to trigger further research. The years 2009 and 2010 saw the publication of two further studies of importance. Whilst only the fifty or so pages which constitute the first chapter of Charles Atkinson's *The Critical Nexus*<sup>80</sup> address the subject of notation in pre-Carolingian times, these pages transmit a lucid description of the elements of Antique music with which notation grappled. The evolution of systems of notation associated with vocal and instrumental music are comprehensively covered in Stefan Hagel's *Ancient Greek Music: A New Technical History* (Cambridge 2010).

The examination of notation in this study locates its purpose in a consideration of what means may have been available to the vocal and instrumental musicians of the early Christian centuries in terms of the visual symbol.<sup>81</sup> With this last phrase in mind, not only written systems of notation, but the hand-signals of chironomy are, at least to a brief extent, regarded as within the remit of this study.

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<sup>80</sup> Charles M. Atkinson, *The Critical Nexus* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>81</sup> Early treatises on music theory display a significant degree of uniformity in the symbols used. The notational method referred to by scholars as the 'Alypian system', indicates not only what is given in Alypius' *Introductio musica*, but the principal system inherited from his treatise-writing predecessors. Whilst notational systems may have coexisted with the 'Alypian', Mathiesen suggests the Alypian to have been favoured by music theorists, and other systems (though not to the exclusion of the Alypian) to have been employed by practical musicians. See Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, pp. 509 and 535.

### *Chironomy.*

In terms of practical usage, it may be asked whether those musicians who directed others by means of the ‘dancing hands’<sup>82</sup> of chironomy had recourse to some form of written reminder to avoid any confusion which might be the outcome of faltering or hesitating memory. Likewise relevant, whether early written notation attempted the pictorial transcription of hand-signals commonly used since distant antiquity. Certainly the presence of chironomy can be detected in many cultures, preceding written notation systems or coexisting with them.<sup>83</sup> Chironomy was used in Temple and synagogue cantillation, and is discussed in the chironomical tables of John of Damascus. According to Philo of Alexandria, it was known to the Essenes.<sup>84</sup> In the supervision of singing Gregorian chant, its alleged further development in the eleventh century is attributed to Guido d’Arezzo (likewise, the development of written notation). Chironomy guided the congregational singing of seventeenth century Puritanism, where it was feared that knowledge of musical notation might encourage the playing of instruments.<sup>85</sup> In fairly recent times, class singing in schools was facilitated by hand-signals associated the Tonic Sol-Fa system – some understanding of which forms an excellent basis for examining earlier chironomy,<sup>86</sup> and (to some extent a development of Tonic Sol-Fa), the ‘Kodaly Method’ – illustrates the concept’s continuous usefulness.<sup>87</sup>

The relevance of chironomy to instrumental playing is well attested to. Egyptian murals, as early as 2700 B.C.E., depicting the use of several chironomers giving hand-

<sup>82</sup> A phrase attributed to pseudo-Cyrril. See Haik-Vantoura, *Music of the Bible*, p. 72.

<sup>83</sup> Warren. D. Anderson, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (Ithaca, 1994), p.105.

<sup>84</sup> Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica* (London [Verso], 1994), p. 54. See Philo, *On the Contemplative Life*, xi, *The Works of Philo Complete*, pp. 705-6.

<sup>85</sup> This is of course, to an extent, a later manifestation of issues central to this study.

<sup>86</sup> In addition to a system of hand-signalling the relative pitch of notes, giving access to major and minor keys as well as the modes (e.g. Aeolian mode consists of the series lah to lah, Dorian, ray-ray, Phrygian, me-me, etc), the Tonic Sol-Fa system offers a written form of notation in which the syllables distinguishing and identifying the notes (doh, ray, me, etc.) can be expressed in easily readable form by abbreviation to the first letter of the syllable. The system extends to chromatics and key changes which can be learned from a form of diagram called the Modulator. The originator of the system, John Curwen (1816-80) intended it as a means leading to conventional, stave based, music reading. In fact its exponents found it sufficiently comprehensive and satisfactory to deter and discourage conventional music reading; an echo of criticism voiced concerning the chironomic practice of antiquity retarding the use of written notation.

<sup>87</sup> For acknowledgement of the indebtedness of the Kodaly Method to the hand signals of John Curwen’s Tonic Sol-Fa, as well as an expressed linkage with the hand sign notation of ancient Hebrews and Egyptians, see Lois Choksy, *The Kodaly Method* (New Jersey, 1988), pp 14-15.

signals to a similar numbers of instrumentalists, confirm that the arm/hand/finger signals of chironomy were not limited to transmission of instruction to singers. In some murals the signals are identical, indicating that the playing was in unison. In others, the use of different signals would suggest some form of harmony.<sup>88</sup> Examples in art depict chironomists directing various sized groups of vocal/instrumental musicians. In some instances, two chironomists work together, one indicating pitch of notes, the other, duration (rhythm).

A certain logic surrounds the concept of written symbols as a development of hand signals, so that Alfred Sendrey is prompted to write of ‘a technique witnessed in the music practice of Antiquity and of early Christian times’:

This was a manner of leading the singing, that consisted pre-eminently in the manual indication of the fall and rise of the melody; also some of the dynamic degrees have been conveyed by various positions of the fingers. ... Eventually, these cheironomic motions were reproduced in graphic signs, from which the medieval neumes, the precursors of the later musical notation, have originated.<sup>89</sup>

To quantify the extent of usage of chironomy, as indeed the use of written notation, remains speculative, but hard evidence that notation was used in early Christian hymnody has been available since at least 1922, with the publication of a late third century Christian hymn fragment, in Greek, with musical notation.<sup>90</sup> The discovery of this fragment caused quite a stir, as hitherto examples of early Christian hymnody were known only from documents transmitting the text but not the music. Now, ‘for the first time it became possible to realise what kind of music Greek-speaking Christians in Egypt sang in praise of the Lord,’<sup>91</sup> though how much could be safely deduced from one such example, begged and received much scholarly discussion.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> For illustrations see Haik-Vantours, *Music of the Bible*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>89</sup> Alfred Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel* (New York, 1969), p. 434.

<sup>90</sup> R.S. Hunt (ed.), *Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, Part xv, No. 1786, pp. 21-25.

<sup>91</sup> E.J. Wellesz, ‘The Earliest Example of Christianity’, *Classical Quarterly* (1945), p. 35.

<sup>92</sup> A.W.J. Holleman, ‘The Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 1786 and the Relationship Between Ancient Greek and Early Christian Music’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 26,1 (1972), pp. 1-17.

The decades following the 1922 appearance of the *Oxrhynchus Papyri* saw, between 1947 and 1956, the discovery of what came to be known as ‘The Dead Sea Scrolls’, and their gradual exposure to scholarship. That there was material for the musicologist soon became clear. Musical references included ‘the history of musical notation, the use of instruments, and the evolution of the antiphon’.<sup>93</sup> Of some ten different symbols, occurring repeatedly in manuscript margins, five were found to be either identical or very similar to Byzantine-Slavonic neumes of the *Notation Kontakarienne* found in Byzantine *Kontakia* – a hymn type of the fifth – seventh centuries.<sup>94</sup> Considerable technical specification concerning musical instruments, especially in the scroll of the *War of the Children of Light Against the Children of Darkness*, prompted Werner to assert that intimation of the practical use of musical instruments, not the symbolic, was intended, writing, ‘they cannot be simply dismissed as allegorical or symbolical, since technical terms were employed that have direct application to real instruments’.<sup>95</sup> Interpretation of the symbols, and possible linkage with musical notation associated with Byzantine *Kontakia*<sup>96</sup> has tended, throughout the succeeding decades, to leave matters in the domain of the speculative. This has spawned the production of sound recordings, for example ‘Chant from the Dead Sea Scrolls’ (2001); ‘movies’, e.g. ‘Secrets of the Dead Sea Scrolls’; even universities have not been immune from staging ‘Dead Sea Inspired Concerts’, as Christos Hatzis of the University of Toronto ‘billed’ his September 2009 promotions. Recordings made by Musica Romana and the CD issued with published papers of the Vienna 2003 symposium of The International Study Group on Music Archaeology, are touched on elsewhere in this chapter and included in the discography of this study, as are earlier (LP) recordings by Anne Draffkord Kilmer.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Eric Werner, ‘Musical Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls’, *The Musical Quarterly* xliii (1) (1957), p. 22.

<sup>94</sup> Werner, ‘Musical Aspects’, p. 23. For illustration, see appendix of this study.

<sup>95</sup> Werner, ‘Musical Aspects’, p. 29.

<sup>96</sup> For a description of which, see Wellesz, *A History of Byzantine Music*, pp. 171-324.

<sup>97</sup> Anne Draffkorn Kilmer ‘The Cult Song with Music from Ancient Ugarit: Another Interpretation’, *Revue d’Assriologie* lxiii (1974), pp. 69-82 and associated LP recording.

Evidence of earlier musical notation, dating from around 1250-1200 B.C. came to light between 1960 and 1970<sup>98</sup> in a sequence of discoveries of cuneiform texts revealing Babylonian methodology in the tuning of stringed instruments, with notated musical fragments. A nomenclature provided for nine individual strings, and a series of seven heptatonic tunings, extended to the compass of a ninth. Some fourteen named intervals form the basis of the notation system.<sup>99</sup> Unfortunately, reading of the notation, particularly with regard to whether or not the fourteen named intervals infer continuous two note chords, produced vastly different transcriptions. These range from Anne Draffkord Kilmer's two part realisation, where every note is harmonised in thirds, fourths, fifths, or sixths, to a more conservative rendition<sup>100</sup> by Lise Manniche.<sup>101</sup> The long standing nature of this issue is clear from Plato:

The teacher of the lyre and his pupil should exploit the precision of the notes produced by the strings by seeing to it that the notes exactly accompany the voices. But to make the lyre sound separately by multiplying each note so that the strings give forth their melody, different from that written [composed] for the voice: and to combine small and wide intervals, quick and slow notes, treble and bass notes: to complicate the rhythms in the lyre's accompaniment in every way – all such affectations should be banned from the teaching repertory.<sup>102</sup>

This is not to suggest that harmony was totally unappreciated, as is indicated in a passage of Macrobius [c. 400 A.D.], which delights in the sound of a mixed choir with instrumental accompaniment:

Consider how many voices go to make up a choir: and yet all of these combine to make but a single voice. Some are high, some low, and some fall between the two. The women singing with the men. The flute adds its voice, and all these different elements form a harmonious ensemble.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> The chronological order given here reflects dates on which evidence was discovered, and does not sequentially date the evidence referred to.

<sup>99</sup> M.L. West, 'The Babylonian Musical Notation and the Hurrian Melodic Texts' in *Music and Letters* 75, No 2 (May, 1994), pp. 162-3.

<sup>100</sup> See discography.

<sup>101</sup> Lisa Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Egypt* (London, 1991), pp. 30-32.

<sup>102</sup> Plato, *Laws*, 7: 812b, tr. Benjamin Jowett.

The relevance of considering music, its notations, and instruments of earlier eras in the context of the first centuries of Christian worship is expressed by West – ‘the life of instruments is to be measured in centuries and millennia, and the same is likely to be true of the musical styles associated with them’.<sup>104</sup> The same might also be said of systems of notation, an appreciation of acoustics, and any long felt desirability of a fixed and standard pitch.

*Pitch, tuned acoustic vases, and ‘sounding brass’.*

Some recent scholarship (for example Stefan Hagel, 2010<sup>105</sup>) argues for the existence in Antiquity of a fixed pitch, suggesting that a standard form of pipe or whistle could be used as a point of reference<sup>106</sup> to achieve ‘an international tuning [which] would have been useful’.<sup>107</sup> This would seem, however, to be something of a forlorn hope. Highly desirable as a constant pitch might be, the difficulties encountered throughout the centuries, suggest that only as a pipe-dream did standardisation of pitch come to pass at any period of musical history prior to the establishment of *New Philharmonic Pitch* in the mid twentieth century.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Macrobius, *Saturn*, i, 9, Jean Perrot, *The Organ from its Hellenistic Period to the end of the Thirteenth Century* (Oxford, 1971), p. 130.

<sup>104</sup> M.L. West, ‘Babylonian Musical Notation and the Hurrian Melodic Texts’, *Music and Letters* vol. 75 no. 2 (May, 1994), p. 179.

<sup>105</sup> Stefan Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music: A New Technical History* (Cambridge, 2010), pp. 68-71.

<sup>106</sup> Perhaps Hagel is influenced by the use of an instrument to sound a starting note for singers (for examples of Temple use see Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, pp. 212 and 435), but this does not imply or evidence that any standard of pitch existed from place to place.

<sup>107</sup> Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 69.

<sup>108</sup> E.g., variance in pitch in the sixteenth century was by as much as five semi-tones between the domestic keyboard pitch, the secular vocal pitch of the time, and the higher church music pitches known as the *Chorton* (two semi-tones higher than secular vocal pitch), and *Cornett-ton* (three semitones higher). Quantz’s treatise on flute playing (written in 1752) refers to these higher pitches being the norm in German churches of his day and during several previous centuries. He draws attention to the difficulties, particularly as French woodwind makers favoured a much lower pitch – the *Kammerton* (chamber pitch). Even though the higher pitches were to be largely abandoned, inconsistency remained. Handel’s tuning-fork (obtained by Handel from the inventor of the device, John Shore, who produced the first tuning-fork in 1711) gave ‘A’ at 422.5 vibrations per second, Mozart favoured a pitch only marginally lower at 421.6. By the eighteenth century the most frequently used pitches ranged between A 415 and 430. The nineteenth century, however saw a widening in variation of pitch. In Britain, orchestras moved between an attempted standard, in 1813, of 423.7, and rival pitches of 433.2 and 452.5 – the latter becoming the standard pitch of the London Philharmonic Society, under the name of *Philharmonic Pitch*. The inconsistencies multiplied with the U.S.A. adopting a much lower French pitch of 435 as *International Pitch*. Raised later to 439/440 standardization was practically achieved (though full implementation took longer, e.g. many brass

Though Hagel argues for it, resonator systems, such as were used in theatres,<sup>109</sup> would seem unlikely enforcers of a standard pitch.<sup>110</sup> Stringed instruments could be tuned to the pitch of the resonators in any given place. It is not unthinkable that professional wind players would carry several instruments of differing pitches. In more recent times they were obliged to do this prior to the standardisation of pitch agreed in 1939.<sup>111</sup> By pressure of lips/breath, a technique known in Antiquity,<sup>112</sup> the instrument nearest to the required pitch could be ‘lipped’ to correspond in pitch to other instruments (or acoustic vases). Aristoxenus comments on aulos players ‘raising and lowering the pitch by changing the pressure of the breath’.<sup>113</sup> Based on reconstructed instruments, Mathiesen states that by movement of the embouchure, the pitch of notes played on the aulos could be varied by as much as a semitone.<sup>114</sup> The burden of carrying more than one instrument was not unknown in Antiquity. For the different reason of playing in various modes, prior to the redesign of the aulos, around 450 B.C. associated with Pronomius of Thebes, it was necessary for players to carry several instruments. Pausanias (c. 150 A.D.) writes:

For a long time it was customary for auletes to possess three types of aulos.

On one, they played in the Dorian mode, while another, different type was

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bands, including the Salvation Army, had invested considerable funds in the provision of instruments at what was, after standardization, regarded as ‘sharp pitch’. These were naturally loath to duplicate the expenses of buying lower pitch instruments) with the advent of *New Philharmonic Pitch*. The origin of ‘transposing instruments’, e.g. clarinets, horns, trumpets, is located in the playing together of instruments of different pitches when this is facilitated by writing for those instruments in keys whose difference from each other corresponds to their different pitch. Further discussion must be considered beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>109</sup> Interest in acoustics is of course, longstanding. The fourth century B.C. Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problems*, frequently visits the subject:-

Why are choruses less distinct when the orchestra [performing area of the theatre] is covered with straw? ... the voice, falling on a surface which is not smooth, is less united. ... Why do newly plastered houses echo more? ... The voice is air which has taken shape and is traveling ... echo, which occurs when air in this condition strikes something hard, is not dissolved, ... we hear it clearly ... it is because it is refracted and not scattered.

Pseudo-Aristotle, *Problems*, 11: 25; 11: 7; 11: 23 respectively, Eleonora Rocconi, ‘Theatres and Theatre Design in the Graeco-Roman World: Theoretical and Empirical Approaches’, in Chris Scarre and Graeme Lawson (eds.), *Archaeoacoustics* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 72.

<sup>110</sup> Though Hagel suggests such resonator systems ‘would have enforced a standard pitch’. See Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 68. The lack of standard pitch throughout musical history would suggest otherwise.

<sup>111</sup> The adoption, internationally, of *New Philharmonic Pitch* (A = 440) was initiated in 1939.

<sup>112</sup> That such technique was known in Antiquity, see Anthony Baines, *Woodwind Instruments and their History* (London, 1957), pp. 200-1.

<sup>113</sup> Aristoxenus, *Harmonic Elements*, in Strunk, *Source Reading*, p. 32.

<sup>114</sup> Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre*, p. 208.



designed for the Phrygian mode; and the mode known as Lydian was played on yet another type. Pronomius was the first to invent an aulos for all these modes, and the first to play so many different melodies on the same instrument.<sup>115</sup>

Hagel's comment, 'if virtuoso aulets took their instruments to different places, an international tuning standard would have been useful',<sup>116</sup> is undeniable. Likewise that virtuoso aulets would be well advised not to 'hold their breath' whilst millennia of musical history brought this to fruition! Examination of surviving fragments of instruments would seem to indicate that 'only the most speculative and tentative suggestions can be made about pitch'.<sup>117</sup>

Paul's comment in 1 Corinthians 13:1, on 'sounding/booming brass' is understood by some scholars 'as an unequivocal reference to a resonating vase of brass of the sort that was placed at the rear of Greek amphitheatres and resonated sympathetically'.<sup>118</sup> Joachim Braun contends that Paul's metaphor in this passage, comparing a person who speaks without love and deep understanding to a noisy, artificially amplified cymbal, does not provide evidence that Paul was hostile to instrumental music.<sup>119</sup> To the contrary, Braun argues, though perhaps a little over-reachingly, that Paul's emphasis on the importance of the clarity of musical performance (1 Corinthians 14: 7-8) suggests that a certain degree of competence and quality of performance was being articulated, 'reflective of a larger situation in which the beginnings of the modern western aesthetics of music and performance were emerging'.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>115</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, tr. W.H.S. Jones (Cambridge, Mass., 2002 [1933]), IX, 12.

<sup>116</sup> Hagel, *Ancient Greek Music*, p. 69.

<sup>117</sup> John G. Landels, 'The Reconstruction of Ancient Greek Auloi', in *World Archaeology*, 1981, 12/3, p. 300.

<sup>118</sup> Braun, *Music*, p. 44 citing William Harris, '“Sounding Brass” and Hellenistic Technology', *Biblical Archaeology Review* 8/1 (1982), pp 38-1.

<sup>119</sup> Braun, *Music*, p. 45.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

William Harris argues that the original Greek phrase for ‘sounding brass’ – *chalkos echon* – is not, in the Hellenistic world, used to describe a musical instrument.<sup>121</sup> This supports his deduction that ‘what Paul was referring to was an echoing brass sound, signifying emptiness’.<sup>122</sup> Vitruvius’ *De Architectura* (late first century B.C.) records the use of acoustic vases made of bronze or terracotta, tuned in unison, fourths, fifths, and octaves, and placed in niches around the seating-tiers of theatres. In larger theatres three ranks of such vases were provided, tuned to the notes of the harmonic, diatonic, and chromatic scales respectively, thereby further enhancing the acoustic response.<sup>123</sup> That during the period of prime concern to this study, tuned vases may have been used in churches, would seem to be evidenced in the fourth-century church (traditionally believed to be the monastery in which Cassian, around 415, wrote *The Monastic Institutes*, and *The Conferences*) of St Victor in Marseille,<sup>124</sup> and is certainly well evidenced later.<sup>125</sup> It may not be thought an unreasonable assertion that what is evidenced both before and after the focused time period of this study was linked by continuity. It may be argued that vases constructed and situated in conformity with the directives of Vitruvius, at whatever period, would achieve effects similar to those he describes. To the extent that such a contention holds good, later examples where ‘the choirs are so fitted with jars in the vaults and in the walls that six voices there make as much noise as forty elsewhere’<sup>126</sup> may indicate a form of musical amplification available to, and possibly practiced within, early church buildings.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Harris, “Sounding Brass”, p. 38.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. citing Vitruvius, *De Architectura*. In the English translation by Morris Hicky Morgan, *Ten Books on Architecture by Vitruvius Pollio*, see pp. 8-9 and 86-88.

<sup>124</sup> Iegor Rezikoff, ‘The Evidence of the Use of Sound Resonance from Palaeolithic to Medieval Times’, Chris Scarre and Graeme Lawson (eds.), *Archaeoacoustics* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 80.

<sup>125</sup> For example the discovery of such vases at Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, in 1854 is described in the *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects* of that year. Similar vases were discovered in over twenty churches in England during the second half of the twentieth century. These are recorded in issues of the *Transactions R.I.B.A.* and in *The Builder* during that period. Presumably Victorian religious fervour triggered church rebuilding/enlargement programmes which in turn led to the discovery of ‘acoustic vases’.

<sup>126</sup> Abbe Cochet, *L’Apocalypse de Meliten* (1665), Gordon M. Hills, ‘Earthenware Pots (Built into Churches), which have been called Acoustic Vases’, *Transactions of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 1881-2, p. 67.

<sup>127</sup> Argument that Paul refers to such vases (I Corinthians 13:1), is also examined later in this chapter.

*Retrieval of Antique sound.*

With the advent of recording techniques which evolved gradually throughout the nineteenth century,<sup>128</sup> and the mushrooming of their commercial development at the start of the twentieth,<sup>129</sup> foundations were laid on which scholarly curiosity<sup>130</sup> would frame questions concerning the possibility of the absorption of sound by objects, and the retrieval of that sound through electronic signal analysis. Richard Woodbridge comments that for the music historian this offered the possibility of ‘recalling ancient sounds from antiquity ... [of] recalling from the past actual sounds, voices, music, etc., adventitiously recorded by ancient people (or events) upon the “surface” or within the substance of a wide variety of objects and artefacts’.<sup>131</sup> Woodbridge goes on to describe the use of a phono pickup ‘positioned against a revolving pot mounted on a phono turntable’ as areas of his investigations, and that ‘low-frequency chatter sound could be heard’<sup>132</sup> through earphones. A quarter of a century later (in 1993), M. Kleiner and P. Astrom, ‘The Brittle Sound of Ceramics – Can Vases Speak?’<sup>133</sup> continued the question ‘are there sounds or voices preserved from antiquity?’<sup>134</sup> The further development of electronic signal analysis, which, as Woodbridge wrote in 1969 ‘more and more can ferret out “signals” buried in “noise”’<sup>135</sup> endorsed by the statement of Kleiner and Astrom ‘that further experiments and a more exact analysis should be of interest’<sup>136</sup> may, in time, produce evidence in this field which could transform the understanding of historians concerned with the sounds of antiquity. As the writer of the ‘Daedalus’ column of the *New Scientist* commented, ‘respectable antiquarians given to voicing the hopeless plea “If only these walls could speak!” will probably be somewhat dismayed by their tone when they do’. It must of course be noted that some serious sophistication would be required of the analysing equipment,

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<sup>128</sup> The capability to both record and play back seems to have reached fruition in France and America around the same time – 1877, with the concepts of Charles Cros in France, and Thomas Edison in America. Cros was to concede that Edison was first to construct a machine capable of reproducing the human voice.

<sup>129</sup> E.g. the early commercial recordings of the Edison Gramophone Company, and of Odeon Records.

<sup>130</sup> See G.M. Hills, ‘Earthenware pots (built into churches) which have been called acoustic vases’ *Transactions of the Royal Society of British Architects* 1881-2, pp. 65-81.

<sup>131</sup> Richard Woodbridge, ‘Acoustic recordings from Antiquity’, *Proceedings of the IEEE* [Institute of the Electrical and Electronic Engineers], August, 1969, p. 1465.

<sup>132</sup> Woodbridge, ‘Acoustic recording’, p. 1465.

<sup>133</sup> M. Kleiner and P. Astrom, ‘The Brittle Sound of Ceramics – Can Vases Speak?’, *Archeology and Natural Science* (1993), pp. 66-72.

<sup>134</sup> Kleiner and Astrom, ‘Brittle Sound’, p. 66.

<sup>135</sup> Woodbridge, letter to the *New Scientist*, 24<sup>th</sup> April, 1969, p. 201.

<sup>136</sup> Kleiner and Astrom, ‘Brittle Sound’, p. 70.

if the assortment of sounds projected at any acoustic vase or other object, throughout the centuries, was to be disentangled. Whether researchers will consider this area as offering solid ground for further study can only be speculated.

The importance of the subject begs at least passing reference to any effect on the making of/hearing of music which may be prompted by the acoustic properties of the building in which it is performed. For example, in a domed basilica, with hard wall surfaces (such as Hagia Sophia), the presence of a lingering echo<sup>137</sup> invites the composition of music which basks in the grandeur of concordant harmony,<sup>138</sup> or is bathed in the resulting cascades of sound, when animated exultation is expressed in rapid successions of notes. Bissera Pentcheva brings to our attention the profound symbolic significance, the otherworldly experience of such resounding sound, ‘In the reverberations of the singing human voices, the word became physically present in Hagia Sophia ... the human *choros* of the gathered faithful performed the enfleshment of the Word, filling the space with sound’.<sup>139</sup> How such sounds, whether occurring in an echo responsive building, or that of a ‘drier’ acoustic, effected the chosen sequence of intervals (difference in pitch between one note and the next) of a melodic line, would venture into too speculative an area to explore within the remit of this study.

## **2. Psalms and hymns; voices and instruments; dances.**

### ***Psalms and hymns.***

Given the diversity of early Christianity – to which reference is made throughout this study – descriptive accuracy may be better served if the terminology indicates *Christianities*. That the use of psalms and hymns reflects this diversity may be thought unsurprising. The favouring of Old Testament psalms, and attitudes towards new

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<sup>137</sup> Bissera Pentcheva cites recent acoustic investigations which give an average reverberation time in Hagia Sophia as around twenty-two seconds when empty, and eleven seconds when full to capacity. See Bissera V. Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium* (Pennsylvania, 2010), p. 53.

<sup>138</sup> As, for example, present day tour guides in the baptistery of Pisa cathedral enjoy demonstrating.

<sup>139</sup> Pentcheva, *Sensual Icon*, p. 51.

composition is likely to have been less than uniform throughout the early churches. The Jewish nature of some early Christian groups and anti-Jewish character of others might be considered a significant factor impacting on the material used in worship. For example, the Marcionites, who seeming not to consider the Old Testament as the heritage of Christians,<sup>140</sup> appear to have used psalms of their own composition instead of Davidic psalms at their worship meetings.<sup>141</sup> For others, the very earliest Christians who were Jews and accustomed to Temple worship, the use of psalms, interpreted in the light of their new faith, and used in some form or rotation, may be argued as providing continuity between Jewish and Christian worship. That music was equally a factor in the every-day lives of pagans, Christians, and Jews is suggested by the musical motifs depicted in mosaic floors. These would seem equally common to the homes of pagans, Christians, and Jews.<sup>142</sup>

A subject unlikely to be highly profiled by writers bent on recording the purity of belief within their worshipping communities, but nonetheless a factor present in any backdrop against which early Christianity and its music is located, is that of syncretism.<sup>143</sup> The existence of ‘strong syncretist religious tendencies [within which] ... from Hellenistic/Roman times to the sixth century, pagan-Jewish-Christian cultural syncretism blossomed’<sup>144</sup> should not be ignored when assessing the cultural background from which Christians converted, as well as in assessing any cultural survivals evident in the practices of early Christian worship. As Luke Timothy Johnson brings to our attention, ‘how complex and subtle were the modes of cultural and religious cross-fertilization’.<sup>145</sup>

Without overplaying the indefinable extent of syncretism, clearly many Jews, especially those of the educated or intellectual class, accepted and frequented the

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<sup>140</sup> E.C. Blackman, *Marcion and His Influence* (Eugene, 2004), p. 118.

<sup>141</sup> Blackman, *Marcion*, p. 64 citing Maruita of Maipherkat, *De Sancta Synodo Nicaenas*.

<sup>142</sup> Joachim Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine: Archaeological, Written, and Comparative Sources* (Grand Rapids, 2002), p. 193. Mosaic floors depicting musical instruments, located in churches, are referred to below.

<sup>143</sup> In chapter one of this study, syncretism is discussed in the context of ‘Christian Identity’.

<sup>144</sup> Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel*, pp. 269 and 270.

<sup>145</sup> Luke Timothy Johnson, *Among the Gentiles: Greco-Roman Religion and Christianity* (New Haven, 2009), p. 30.

Greek institutions of the gymnasium and sporting events. They also ‘embraced the Dionysian cult ... welcoming it as a cultural device facilitating assimilation and an improvement of one’s social status’.<sup>146</sup> When ancient authors bring to our attention any similarity in customs associated with Jewish and Dionysian rituals, it is not uncommon for music to be the focus of such attention. Plutarch, for example, remarks that ‘they [the Jews] celebrate yet another festival, this one now dedicated quite openly to Bacchus ... to invoke the god they use small trumpets of the sort the Argives use at their own Dionysian ceremonies. Others, whom we call Levites, play the cithara when they come out’.<sup>147</sup> Also, as was noted a half century ago by G.B. Caird, the causes of syncretism did not travel a one way street – ‘by far the most likely cause [is to be attributed] to the visits paid to the synagogue by partially converted Gentiles’.<sup>148</sup>

Clearly, the spectrum of Christian opinion and practice extended from those who believed the purity of their faith contaminated by participation in anything which smacked of the pagan, to those wishing to retain as much of old customs as compatibility with the new religion could flexibly accommodate. Indeed at the shallow end of Christian commitment, can be located a small number of bishops, for example Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais c.410, who accepted his bishopric on condition that it did not interfere with his philosophical principles,<sup>149</sup> and Pegasius, bishop of Troy, who embraced the pagan priesthood under Julian (emp. c.361-c.363), demonstrating ‘the proximity of beliefs among a number of cultivated minds’.<sup>150</sup> Perhaps more importantly, Pegasius had taken orders and succeeded in becoming a bishop so as to provide security and protection to pagan sanctuaries from Christian desecration.<sup>151</sup> Hanson writes, ‘We may conclude that the literature of the early Christian Church probably gives us an unbalanced view of the relation of Christianity to paganism. Intellectually and socially the Christians may have attempted to maintain

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<sup>146</sup> Braun, *Music*, p. 273.

<sup>147</sup> Plutarch, *Quaestiones Conviviales* 4: 2, Bruan, *Music*, p. 273.

<sup>148</sup> G.B. Caird, *The Apostolic Age* (London, 1955), p. 30.

<sup>149</sup> The more important illustration provided by this situation being not to what extent Synesius functioned effectively as a Christian bishop, but rather the implication, that his position was acceptable enough for a bishopric to be offered.

<sup>150</sup> P. Chuvin, *A Chronicle of the Past Pagans* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), p. 42.

<sup>151</sup> J.B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire* vol. 2, (Mineola, 1958), p. 376, citing Julian, *Epistle* 78, ed. Hertlein.

a complete intolerance and isolation. Culturally, they could not and hardly attempted to do so'.<sup>152</sup>

*Pagan hymns and cultural continuity.*

The importance of hymns within pagan concepts of religiosity is made clear by Plutarch, who in *De Musica* wrote, 'it is a pious act and one of the highest importance for mankind to sing hymns to the gods who have given articulate voice to mankind alone'.<sup>153</sup> Ancient pagan hymns had long been linked to instrumental accompaniment, especially with instruments of the plucked string family (harp, cithara, lyre, etc.), or the aulos. In 405 B.C. Aristophanes had written:

Let us cry aloud our hymns,  
Aulos-accompanied, our good voiced song.<sup>154</sup>

Other examples might include 'Come now, Lydian girls, pluckers of strings, singers of hymns',<sup>155</sup> and 'The goddess laughed, and accepted into her hands the deep-noised aulos, delighting in the joyful sound'.<sup>156</sup> The absence of instrumental accompaniment to the voice may be seen as having negative or sinister connotations, for example, 'you inspire the Argive army with desire for Theban blood, leading the chorus in revelling dance accompanied by no aulos'.<sup>157</sup> Pausanias, writing in about 150 A.D., in his *Description of Greece*, reflects on the rich heritage of musical competition, recounting the story of Hesiod (?860 B.C.), who was debarred from competing in a hymn singing competition 'because he had not learned to accompany his own singing on the harp'.<sup>158</sup>

Whilst hymning praise and thanksgiving to God would seem an appropriate response to events of Christian triumph – for example victory by a Christian ruler who

<sup>152</sup> Richard P. C. Hanson, *Studies in Christian Antiquity* (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 208.

<sup>153</sup> Plutarch, *De Musica*, Andrew Barker, *Greek Musical Writing I: The Musician and His Art* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 206.

<sup>154</sup> Aristophanes, *Frogs*, Barker, *Greek Musical Writing I*, p. 112.

<sup>155</sup> Athenaeus, *Omphale*, Barker, *Greek Musical Writing I*, p. 294.

<sup>156</sup> Euripides, *Helen*, Barker, *Greek Musical Writing*, p. 76.

<sup>157</sup> Euripides, *Phoeissae*, Barker, *Greek Musical Writing*, p. 73.

<sup>158</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, tr. W.H.S. Jones (London, 1933), 10: 7.3. vol. IV, p. 403.

vanquishes his (and the Christian community's) enemies – the theme of 'immortalised glory in song'<sup>159</sup> is ancient. For example, Barker states of Pindar (522–442 B.C.), 'He is writing in a tradition that still has its roots in hymns to the gods, and in singing the praises of men he is investing them with something of the same divinity'.<sup>160</sup> Homer, in the *Iliad*, writes of:

...Achilles playing on a lyre, fair, of cunning workmanship, and its cross-bar was of silver ... he was now diverting himself with it and singing the feats of heroes.<sup>161</sup>

It could also be noted that hymns sung in procession were not an exclusively Christian phenomenon. Pagans were familiar with competitions in marching hymns to be sung in procession. Robin Lane Fox notes that processions 'meant hymns, old hymns recopied in the Imperial age, newer hymns and prose panegyrics',<sup>162</sup> adding, with a glimpse of far reaching continuity, that at the level of the procession 'the impact of a pagan cult can still be sensed in the journeys of the Christian images through the cities of southern Spain during Holy Week'.<sup>163</sup> If such 'Christian' events were perceived by participants as evoking the presence of God, this too was not without its pagan foreshadowing in hymns connected with civic festivals. The pagan crowd's eager anticipation of the presence of their god, and the good effect of such presence, is expressed in a hymn of Callimachus:

We shall see you, archer Apollo, we shall see you,  
and then we will no longer be mean and lowly.<sup>164</sup>

Choirs of pagan children were not unknown. Likewise choirs singing hymns on pilgrimage.<sup>165</sup> The two might be combined, such as are recorded at the great oracular

<sup>159</sup> Barker, *Greek Musical Writing*, p. 55.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>161</sup> Homer, *The Iliad*, 9: 182, tr. Robert Fitzgerald (Oxford, 1984), p. 148.

<sup>162</sup> Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 67.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>164</sup> Callimachus, Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 114.

<sup>165</sup> Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 178.



shrine at Claros. Cities would send their envoys on such pilgrimages, complete with a hymn teacher and *paidonomos* (tutor) of probity and over forty years of age.<sup>166</sup>

Pagan traditions of hymnody, like those of Jewish psalmody, were rendered more musically colourful by the inclusion of accompanying instruments. Whilst desire to distance the uniqueness of Christian worship from non-Christian religious practices might be seen as grounds on which the Fathers might disparage those instruments, for the ‘ordinary’ Christian convert, instrumentally accompanied sung worship was an integral part of their Jewish or gentile heritage<sup>167</sup> – and not to be lightly renounced.<sup>168</sup>

### *Psalms in Jewish worship.*

The composition of psalms, whether conceived as hymns of praise, or for the purpose of petition, lamentation, enthronement, blessing, cursing, etc., is interwoven with references to the musical instruments which provide an accompaniment. Terrien defines the word ‘psalm’ as meaning ‘song’ or ‘chant’ which is accompanied.<sup>169</sup> For the psalmist, musical instruments are integral to worship. This is expressed in a psalm fragment recovered from Qumran, which reads:

With my hands I made a flute,  
And with my fingers I fashioned a cithara,  
Here I could render glory to God.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>167</sup> There is sufficient evidence to substantiate the infiltration of Jewish and pagan musical concepts into Christian musical practice. Jewish influence is generally regarded as discernable in some of the chants used by Christians (see below for comments by Werner, and Terrien, on psalm-tones). Pagan melodies were certainly used in some Christian hymnody (see below, Arius, Bardesanes, Ephrem, Paul of Samosata). Apel brings to our attention the melodic similarity between the Seikilos song *Hoson zes* and the antiphon *Hosanna filio David* associated with Palm Sunday. See Willi Apel, *Gregorian Chant* (Bloomington, 1958), pp. 36-7.

<sup>168</sup> As Jennifer Nimmo Smith writes, ‘dancing and singing to musical instruments became part of Christian worship ... the all night celebrations of [pagan] festivals was transferred to ther cults of Christian saints’. Jennifer Nimmo Smith, *A Christian’s Guide to Greek Culture: The Pseudo-Nonnus Commentaries and Sermons 4, 5, 39, and 43 by Gregory of Nazianzus* (Liverpool, 2001), xxxvi.

<sup>169</sup> Samuel Terrien, *The Psalms: Strophic Structure and Theological Commentary* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>170</sup> Psalm 151a, Terrien, *The Psalms*, pp. 11 and 931.

Terrien goes so far as to suggest that composition of the words and music of psalms was a simultaneous process, not a ‘selection of versified words that were later put to music ... rather, it is probable that the psalmists’ inspiration provided a sort of osmoses between the sound of the voice and the sound of instruments’.<sup>171</sup> Any extent to which instrumental music may be regarded as integral to the words-and-music composition of the psalms<sup>172</sup> may be argued as contributing to any residual tendency to retain harp/lyre accompaniment which prompted the prohibiting ire of the Fathers to be poured over any cantor who dared to learn the cithara, as discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Wind instruments are much less frequently mentioned in the Psalter. Terrien postulates that this is ‘perhaps because they were associated with sexual rites of neighbouring nations or profane sensuality’.<sup>173</sup> Such sentiments would, of course, find resonance later, with the Christian Fathers.

*Definition; ‘psalm’ and ‘hymn’.*

Many historians have not sought a distinction between psalm and hymn. F.E. Warren, at the close of the nineteenth century, wrote of ‘the hymn recorded to have been sung by our Saviour ... is generally supposed to have been Psalms CXV – CXVIII’.<sup>174</sup> The terms seem to be interchangeable, at least to the extent that ‘hymn’ may be substituted for ‘psalm’. McKinnon, in the index of *MECL*, provides a sub-heading ‘hymn – synonym for psalm’,<sup>175</sup> and lists a total of thirteen examples from the writings of the Fathers. As noted later in this chapter, certain Fathers clearly regard hymns as that portion of the psalms which aspire to the highest devotional level, prompting some historians (for example McKinnon) to employ a two tier categorisation of the psalms. It may not be unreasonable to regard psalms as also being hymns, whilst regarding only the one hundred and fifty biblical psalms – ‘The Psalms’ – as psalms properly so called. Strict categorisation, however, might go beyond anything discernable in the early centuries of Christianity.

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<sup>171</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, p. 33.

<sup>172</sup> Sigmund Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (Grand Rapids, 2004 [1962]), I, p. 89.

<sup>173</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, p. 33.

<sup>174</sup> F.E. Warren, *Liturgy and Ritual of the Ante-Nicene Church* (London, 1912), p. 28.

<sup>175</sup> *MECL*, p. 179.

The employment of well known tunes or folk songs in hymnody seems to have been popular with ‘heretics’. The mid fourth century Council of Laodicea was clearly worried about the orthodoxy of hymns, banning the delivery of *idiotikous psalmous legesthai* in church.<sup>176</sup> The danger of hymns sung to folk culture tunes and rhythms lay not only in the possible heretical message the words might convey, but that the music itself might be a source of collective disorder, descend into sensuality, or challenge religious authority.<sup>177</sup> Ephrem, however, would appear to have countered the popular heretical hymns of Bardesanes not only with the orthodoxy of his own hymns, but by using the same or similar popular tunes as Bardaisan, some of which, surviving the intervening century, clearly captivated the young.<sup>178</sup> Ephrem writes of Bardaisan:

In the resorts of Bardesanes  
There are songs and measures.  
For seeing that young persons  
Loved sweet music,  
By the harmony of his songs  
He corrupted their minds.<sup>179</sup>

Of the hymns of Ephrem, however, Henry Burgess sadly notes, ‘On the nature of the tunes [or] the musical instruments employed ... we are profoundly ignorant’.<sup>180</sup>

*Christianization of psalms; modes suitable for Christian use.*

As Samuel Terrien writes, patristic literature ‘swarms with allusions to the Psalms’.<sup>181</sup> He notes that Clement of Rome (c. 96 A.D.) cites the Psalms more than a hundred

<sup>176</sup> Council of Laodicea, c. 59, Christopher Page, *The Christian West and its Singers* (Yale 2110), p. 90.

<sup>177</sup> The observation is made by Simon Frith that in recent times the Taliban outlawed music on much the same grounds. See Simon Frith, ‘Music and Everyday Life’, in Martin Clayton (ed.), *The Cultural Study of Music: A Critical Introduction* (New York, 2003), p. 99.

<sup>178</sup> Henry Burgess, *Hymns and Homilies of Ephraem Syrus* (London, 1953), xxxi-ii.

<sup>179</sup> Ephrem, *Homily Against Heresies I*, Burgess, *Hymns and Homilies*, xxxi.

<sup>180</sup> Burgess, *Hymns and Homilies*, lvii.

<sup>181</sup> Terrien, *The Psalms*, p. 2.

times, in order to establish his messianic interpretation of the Old Testament.<sup>182</sup> The pageant of succeeding writing on the Psalms is too well known to require demonstration here, encompassing as it does, possibly the most commented on section of the Bible, and one of the most influential in early Christian theology, culture, and imagination. Within the time span of this study, the Psalms ‘became not only the canvas of the Eucharistic liturgy but also the substance of the divine office’.<sup>183</sup>

As touched on earlier, the defining of worship as ‘Christian’, is, in the context of this study, not confined to what might (later) be accepted as ‘orthodox’. These times were, as Sozomen describes, ‘disturbed by some contentions’.<sup>184</sup> As examples we might cite the use of pagan melodies sung by the male and female choirs of Arius in the early fourth century, and earlier, the choirs of women singers adapting popular melodies of the day, introduced by Paul of Samos around 260 A.D.<sup>185</sup> Both were condemned by ‘orthodox’ Christian leaders.<sup>186</sup> Such initiatives, however, may have advanced the concept of music in church, which in some instances hardly extended beyond the limitations of merely intoned speech.<sup>187</sup> A pioneer, who could be seen as a decisive force in the promotion of singing in church, was Ambrose (340-397). He was clearly aware that his views provoked controversy – ‘They also say that the people are led astray by the charms of my hymns.’<sup>188</sup> In composing hymns, Ambrose defined four modes as permissible in sung worship<sup>189</sup> – the Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, and Mixolydian – though some confusion exists as to whether the names (identity) he applied to those modes conformed to the Greek. The contemporary of Ambrose, Francis of Cologne described the hymns of Ambrose as being ‘all for sweetness and melodious sound’.<sup>190</sup> As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, the character of the modes – and therefore suitability for purpose – is derived from the musical effect produced by the nominated series of intervals used in their construction, and the

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<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> Sozomen, *H.E.*, 1: 5.

<sup>185</sup> Eusebius, *H.E.*, 7: 30.

<sup>186</sup> Edward MacDowell, *Historical Essays*, p. 148.

<sup>187</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, 10: 33.

<sup>188</sup> Ambrose, *Sermo contra Auxentium de basilicis tradendis* xxxiv, *MECL*, p. 132.

<sup>189</sup> MacDowell, *Historical Essays*, pp. 149 and 154.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

height or depth of pitch with which a particular mode may be associated.<sup>191</sup> Plato, for example, describes the Mixolydian as ‘dirge-like’, whilst the Lydian is ‘intense’.<sup>192</sup>

The origins of the modes would seem linked to geographical differences of musical idiom rather than being the product of a system aiming to embrace a compendium of different tonalities – though this might be seen as the inevitable consequence of their correlation. We are told, for example, that legendary Amphion<sup>193</sup> ‘won fame for his music, learning from the Lydians themselves the Lydian mode’.<sup>194</sup> Schueller writes, ‘each tribe had a different “mode”, and its mode reflected its own nature’.<sup>195</sup> This accords with Boethius, stating, ‘for the modes are named after the people that find pleasure in them’.<sup>196</sup> The Dorian mode seems to have been regarded as austere and was believed to encourage virtue.<sup>197</sup> In *The Republic*, Plato discusses quite fully the modes and their various characters.<sup>198</sup> Aristotle contrasts the Dorian and Phrygian modes – ‘the Phrygian is to the modes what the flute is to musical instruments – both of them are exciting and emotional ... Dorian music is the gravest and manliest ... our youth should be taught the Dorian music’.<sup>199</sup>

By the early sixth century, Cassiodorus, describing the antique modes within a Christian context, attaches to them much the same qualities as had pagan writers. The Dorian mode produces modesty and purity, the Phrygian fierce combat, Aeolian

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<sup>191</sup> Whilst much has been controversially written on this subject, it may be safe to suggest that what Ambrose referred to as the Dorian (more anciently called Phrygian) would be likely to cluster round a lower pitch *mese* than the other three approved modes. In ascending order of pitch these would be Phrygian (anciently called Dorian); Lydian (anciently called Hypolydian); and highest, Mixolydian (old Hypophrygian). In modern terminology, the distance in pitch from the lowest mode (of the four approved by Ambrose) to the highest may have been a ‘fourth’ (five semi-tones). Actual pitch, or the likelihood of consistency of pitch in different locations, or with certainty the extent of any pitch difference between the modes, cannot be firmly established. See later in this chapter.

<sup>192</sup> Plato, *Republic* 3: 398, tr. Davies and Vaughan, p. 87.

<sup>193</sup> Amphion, in legend the son of Zeus and Antiope, may be seen as an example, common in Greek thought, of tracing music (and other arts) to a divine source.

<sup>194</sup> Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, tr. W.H.S. Jones, 9: 5:7.

<sup>195</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 40.

<sup>196</sup> Boethius, *The Principles of Music* I, in Bower, *Boethius, ‘The Principles’*, p. 33.

<sup>197</sup> Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 40.

<sup>198</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 3: 398, tr. Davies and Vaughan, p. 87.

<sup>199</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 1342b, tr. Ernest Barker (Oxford, 1958), p. 351.

tranquillity, Ionian sharpness of intellect, the Lydian soothes the soul.<sup>200</sup> The number of modes used would not, however, appear to be uniform. A technical description of fifteen ‘keys’ (modes) is given by Cassiodorus in the *Institutions*<sup>201</sup> whilst in the *Principals of Music*, Boethius lists seven modes, ‘the names ascribed to the notes along with their notational signs’.<sup>202</sup> Discussion on the number of modes correctly being either eight or ten, contained in the Byzantine treatise *Hagiopolites*, is brought to our attention by Peter Jeffery.<sup>203</sup>

Although what was to emerge by the early ninth century as a structuring of church music around eight ‘psalm-tunes’ (the eight modes of Gregorian chant), shared a measure of common terminology with the earlier Greek modal systems, these were not consistent in regard to what that terminology represented. The transition from earlier modes, via Ambrose, to the later psalm-tunes seems more the product of adaptation than of evolution. As Edward McDowell wrote, ‘the ancient modes had become corrupted ... [for example] the [four] modes that Ambrose took for his hymns were different from those known in Greece under the same name. His Dorian is what the ancients called Phrygian,[etc. <sup>204</sup>] ... Between the sixth and tenth centuries there was much confusion as to the placing of these modes’.<sup>205</sup> Amongst not dissimilar comment of more recent scholarship is that of Peter Jeffery:

We now know that the eight modes of Gregorian chant theory bear little resemblance to the seven or eight or thirteen or fifteen octave species or modulation schemes derived from the tuning of the ancient Greek lyre ... The artificial identification of the medieval modes with the ancient Greek tonoi was a product of the Middle Ages itself ... The medieval terminology illustrates ... a willingness to adopt or even invent Greek technical terms without regard for actual Greek

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<sup>200</sup> Based on letters written by Cassiodorus for King Theodoric and addressed to Boethius, cited Schueller, *The Idea*, p. 274.

<sup>201</sup> See Cassiodorus, *The Institutions* 8, tr. James W. Halporn (Liverpool, 2004), pp. 219-221.

<sup>202</sup> Bower, *Boethius’ ‘The Principals*, 4: 16, p. 281.

<sup>203</sup> Peter Jeffery, ‘The Earliest Oktoechoi: The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginnings of Modal Ordering’, Peter Jeffery (ed.), *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 185-7.

<sup>204</sup> McDowell, *Critical Essays*, pp. 149 and 154.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-53.

usage, giving even wholly Western phenomena an erudite, Hellenistic appearance.<sup>206</sup>

From the late eighth and early ninth centuries, at the instigation of Pepin, Charlemagne, Pope Leo II, and their temporal and spiritual successors, diversity compatible with early Christianities may be argued to be subjected to systematic attempts to achieve uniformity. Uniformity of musical style was part of the package. Were it not beyond the remit of this study, however, even here, close examination might reveal that diversity was not totally extinct. An example might be Kassia; a virgin, a beauty, and the earliest named woman composer. Writing from her Constantinople monastery in the early ninth century, Kassia achieved great acclaim by the composition of hymns – text and musical notation (including intimation of instrumental accompaniment)<sup>207</sup> – which allegedly even impressed the emissaries of Charlemagne<sup>208</sup> – and somehow managed to survive.

### ***Voices and instruments.***

By voice, by breath, and by striking: by voice, that is by the throat and the wind pipe of a singing man without any sort of instrument; by breath, as with the tibia or anything of that kind; by striking, as with the cithara or anything of that sort.<sup>209</sup>

### ***Voices***<sup>210</sup>

Whilst controversy has consistently surrounded the use of instruments to support/embellish sung worship, issues concerning the simplicity or elaboration which

<sup>206</sup> Peter Jeffery, 'The Earliest Oktoechoi: The Role of Jerusalem and Palestine in the Beginnings of Modal Order', Peter Jeffery (ed.), *The Study of Medieval Chant: Paths and Bridges, East and West* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 149 and 155.

<sup>207</sup> Diane Touliatos, *Kassia: Byzantine Hymns from the First Female Composer of the Occident* [with CD] (Heidelberg, 2009), p.12.

<sup>208</sup> Touliatos, *Kassia*, p. 41.

<sup>209</sup> Augustine, *In psalmum cl*, 8, MECL, p. 160, PL XXXVII, 1965.

<sup>210</sup> To the extent that attitudes to vocalisation are not without a gender component the subject of specifically 'women's voices' is discussed in chapter two.

should determine vocal styles has also generated heated discussion during the period of concern to this study and beyond.<sup>211 212</sup> Attempts to restrict the singing voice (for example the comments of Augustine, in *Confessions*, concerning Athanasius, who ‘required the reader of the psalm to perform it with so little inflection of voice that it was closer to speaking than to singing’<sup>213</sup>) have been touched on elsewhere in this study. However, more expansive use of the voice, not only in the inventiveness of what was sung, but including methods of sound amplification, was not unknown, and in some geographical locations at least, prominent Church figures were its exponents.<sup>214</sup>

Elsewhere in this study the differing practices of geographically central, and geographically peripheral Christianity have been referred to. The early Celtic Christianity of Ireland and western Britain has provided material relevant to this study, concerning the use of the voice, instruments, and ascetic practice, albeit dating from the later end of the time-line defining this study. Just as miracle working capability was an important attribute of the evangelizing missionary, so, in the Celtic

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<sup>211</sup> Such timeless controversy is more colourfully, if less politely put by mid twelfth century Abbot of Rievaulx, Aelred:-

What need has the Church, I should like to know ... of thundering organs, clashing cymbals and the monstrous heaving of bellows? As for the voice, so naturally pleasant, why do we hear it now strangled and muted, now cracked, now at full throttle, now subjected to the constraints of elaborate three-part singing? ... or raised from its manly register to a mannered warbling. I have seen monks with mouths agape, the sound cut off in mid-breath, as it were threatening the world with silence, and looking as though they were either at the point of death or lost in ecstasy, rather than singing. This ridiculous performance is accompanied by all manner of theatrical gestures: lips grimace, arms saw the air and fingers flex to greet each note. And this effeminate clowning goes under the name of religion. ... simple people, certainly, are impressed by the swoosh of the bellows, the clash of cymbals, the sweet sound of the pipes and the tremendous thunder of it all. See Aelred of Rievaulx, *The Mirror of Charity* II, 23, in Pauline Matarasso (tr. and ed.), *The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century* (London, 1993), p. 192.

<sup>212</sup> In its relevance to ‘Christian identity’, ‘Asceticism’, and the ‘Passions/emotions’ the subject of vocal style is also broached in chapters one, two, and four respectively.

<sup>213</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* 10: 33, *MECL*, p. 155, *PL* XXXII, 800. Werner infers [*Sacred Bridge* 1, p. 121] from the statement ‘made the cantor’ that Athanasius was required to ‘exert his episcopal authority to make the lector change his normal practice of real singing’. Apel writes [*Gregorian Chant*, pp. 39-40] ‘this has been considered as indirect evidence that fairly elaborate methods of singing existed at that time’. How safe it is to regard Athanasius as musically minimalist may be brought into question when tested against his *Letter to Marcellinus* (28 and 29) which expresses the view that the Lord ‘has ordered that the odes be chanted tunelessly, and the Psalms recited with song’. Marcellinus is also instructed that ‘the melodic reading is a symbol of the mind’s well-ordered and undisturbed condition’ and that when the monk is ‘beautifully singing praises, he brings rhythm to his soul’.

<sup>214</sup> Discussed below.



world of Ireland and western Britain, was the attribute of a powerful singing voice – or so the earliest biographers of Celtic saints would have us believe. Adomnan (628-704 A.D.), for example, writes of Columba (521-597 A.D.) singing ‘spiritual chants of a kind never heard before’,<sup>215</sup> and ‘his voice was miraculously lifted up in the air like some terrible thunder, so that the king [Bridei, of the Picts] and his people were filled with unbearable fear’.<sup>216</sup> Music historian John Purser writes that this is suggestive of a singing style where two notes are produced simultaneously:<sup>217</sup>

... [that] Columba had mastered some esoteric vocal techniques such as emphasizing the harmonics that exist in everyone’s voice. The lower harmonic can be used to give a lion-like sound to the voice, at the same time giving the impression that the singer has two voices, for the ordinary sung note is heard at the same time as the harmonic an octave below – a remarkable sound which might create in others the frightening impressions that Adomnan describes.<sup>218</sup>

In less intimidating vein, tradition has it that Brendan of Clonfert (the Navigator) and Columba sang together at Mass on the island of Hinba,<sup>219</sup> which Purser speculates might be in accord with singing techniques referred to in ancient Gaelic as *fodhorn* (low murmuring), and *dordan* (light murmuring). Certainly the cultivation of various vocal techniques is indicated in *Cormac’s Glossary* (?eighth century), which possibly dating only a few decades beyond the time span of this study, may be argued as having some relevance.<sup>220</sup>

It is not of course suggested that only at the ‘ends of the earth’ (which some early Celtic missionaries believed their territory to be) was the practice of vocal amplification pursued. Other forms of amplification, for example the acoustic vases

<sup>215</sup> Adomnan of Iona, tr. Richard Sharpe, *Life of St Columba* (London, 1995), 3: 18.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, 1: 37.

<sup>217</sup> John Purser, *The Kilmartin Sessions: The Sounds of Ancient Scotland* (Kilmartin, 1997), section 33 of literature accompanying CD. See discography.

<sup>218</sup> John Purser, *Scotland’s Music* (Edinburgh, 1992), p. 35.

<sup>219</sup> Purser, *Kilmartin*, section 33. However, the only occasion of Brendan visiting Columba recorded in Adomnan’s *Life* (III, 15), does not mention singing.

<sup>220</sup> The vocal techniques specified in *Cormac’s Glossary*, and the later *Book of Lismore* are given by Purser in *Scotland’s Music*, p. 34.

associated with Corinth, have been briefly discussed earlier, but more closely related to care of the voice and quality of sound than to volume, was the use of ‘those expedients which artists in music adopt, for the preservation and improvement of their voices’.<sup>221</sup> Nero, as described by Suetonius, is believed to have consumed large quantities of leeks to improve the quality of his voice.<sup>222</sup> Other emollients/unguents such as raw eggs, honey, jellies, and custards were widely used.<sup>223</sup> Suetonius’s biography of Nero provides many insights into the life of a professional musician, for example that a singer would lie down on his/her back, with a lead sheet placed on the chest, as a means of correcting any unsteadiness in breathing; clear the bowels by vomit and clysters; abstain from food for two days before an important performance; not eat fruit or sweet pastry.<sup>224</sup> Church Fathers denounced the use, by singers, of unguents on their throats in order to make the voice more flexible and impressive. Jerome, for example, in stressing the priority of a singer’s interior disposition over musical display, disparages ‘daubing the mouth and throat with some sweet medicine after the manner of tragedians.’<sup>225</sup> Artistic creativity, and personal aggrandizement, whatever their merits or demerits, may not always tread totally separate paths, nor assume totally separate identity. Virtuoso techniques were well known to vocal as well as instrumental musicians,<sup>226</sup> and likewise, the rivalry of competition, culturally ingrained, was not necessarily exorcised at the church door.

### *Instrumental preludes.*

Instrumental preludes, or introductions to accompanied singing, would seem to be not totally unknown. Comments concerning psalm-singing, attributed to Bede, for example ‘After a prelude on an instrument, the sound of a singing voice is heard, following and keeping time with the instrument, imitating the strains of the psaltery

<sup>221</sup> Suetonius, tr. Alexander Thompson, *The lives of the Twelve Caesars: Nero* (recent undated reprint, Dodo Press), xx, p. 10.

<sup>222</sup> Morell Mackenzie, *The Hygiene of the Vocal Organs: A Practical Handbook for Singers and Speakers* (London, 1888), p. 51, citing Pliny.

<sup>223</sup> Mackenzie, *Vocal Organs*, pp. 51-2.

<sup>224</sup> Suetonius, *Nero*, xx. See also MacDowell, *Essays*, p. 143.

<sup>225</sup> Jerome, *Commentarium in epistulam ad Ephesios* III. 5: 19, *MECL*, p. 145, *PL* XXVI, 528. On the use of unguents in the fourth/fifth century Church, see MacDowell, *Essays*, p. 155.

<sup>226</sup> For example, elsewhere in this study mention is made of high fees paid to performers (MacDowell, *Essays*, pp. 137-8), the influence of Nero’s singing teacher on the emperor’s attempts to achieve musical virtuosity (Suetonius, *Nero*, 20:21) and the modifications made to the aulos to facilitate more virtuosic performance as given in Pausanias. See also William James Henderson, *Early History of Singing* (London, 2010 [1921]), p. 9.

with the tones of the voice'<sup>227</sup> would indicate such a possibility. The desire of senior clerics of the English Church, to import instrumentalists from across the channel,<sup>228</sup> may be thought compatible with such a concept. Whether viewed from the Celtic perspective of western Britain and Ireland, or the English Anglo-Saxon Church, within which Bede's writings (dated only decades beyond the timeframe of this study), are formulated, a greater sympathy towards musical instruments is observable.

As briefly discussed elsewhere, a cultural background exists concerning instrumental preludes and intermissions. Short instrumental interludes may well have been intermingled with psalms sung in the Temple. Also, in pagan worship, musical interludes clearly formed a substantial element in ceremonies – to the extent that Celsus seizes on this to demonstrate (to the annoyance of Christians) a similarity with the Christian instrumental preludes he describes as intended to stimulate the emotions of the assembled company prior to worship.<sup>229</sup> <sup>230</sup> As discussed below, the fourth century Christianization of Imperial ceremonial is an area where instrumental participation in Christian worship can be argued, and instrumental intermissions seem not to be unknown.

### *Instruments.*

In attempting to glimpse into the musical life of several centuries of musical history, many of the areas examined beg greater coverage than available space allows. The subject of musical instruments in use during the early centuries A.D. would certainly come into such a category. These instruments, or any 'family' of them (stringed, blown, struck), or indeed any single instrument, offers and invites the possibility of focused research of it alone as a study of dissertation format. It is some consolation that so much research has been done and studies written. Examples include, Mathiesen's *Apollo's Lyre* which devotes over thirty thousand words to Greek

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<sup>227</sup> John Mason Neal, and Richard Frederik Littedale, *A Commentary On The Psalms: From Primitive And Mediaeval Writers And From The Various Office-Books And Hymns Of The Roman, Mozarabic, and Syrian Rites*, volume 3, (London, 1871), p. 22, citing Bede's commentary of psalm 97.

<sup>228</sup> For example the correspondence between Cuthbert of Wearmouth, and Lul of Mainz, discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>229</sup> Celsus, *On the True Doctrine*, p. 71

<sup>230</sup> Just as in a present day church/cathedral setting, an organ prelude might be suspected of attempting.

musical instruments, around thirteen thousand to the aulos alone. Maas and McIntosh Snyder's *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece*, as the title suggests, commits its one hundred and fifty thousand words to Greek stringed instruments, though perhaps less concerned than Mathiesen with experience gained in the manufacture of reproduction instruments.

Others, too, have invested much time into research supporting the manufacture of accurate reproduction instruments. Where music historians have concerned themselves both with creating historically correct playable instruments, and study of the small number of papyrus fragments which are instrumentally notated, the ensuing performances and recordings provide an enormous contribution to any appreciation of the actual sounds of Antiquity, about which speculative reams have been written. Perhaps the most comprehensive collection to appear in CD format is that of Atrium Musicae de Madrid, whose 1999 reissue by Harmonia Mundi<sup>231</sup> of twenty-two tracks recorded in 1979, provides a 'realization' of some significant fragments – including the Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1786, frequently cited as the earliest known documented Christian hymn containing musical instructions. Atrium Musicae also provide the recorded sounds of a wide spectrum of instruments. More recently (2009) music historians involved both in research and performance (as the ensemble 'Musica Romana') have issued a CD *Musica Romana – Pugnate*. Some members of Musica Romana (for example Susanne Ruhling) are involved in The International Study Group on Music Archaeology, whose forthcoming publication (ed. Susanne Ruhling) *Ancient Sounds for Modern Ears: Archaeomusicology in Media and Performance*, (papers delivered at the sixth symposium of the ISGMA, held at the Ethnological Museum, Berlin, 2009), will no doubt provide interesting reading. The recordings of Atrium Musicae, Musica Romana, and others (for example Christine Harrauer, *Ancient Greek Music in Performance* (material from the 2003 ISGMA symposium, held in Vienna) are listed in the 'discography' appended to this study. Not to be ignored, the earlier recordings of Haik-Vantoura, which together with her study *The Music of the Bible Revealed* (1978), provides enlightening material on instruments associated with the Old Testament, benefited by her own experience as a player

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<sup>231</sup> See discography.

recreating informed and imaginative performance.<sup>232</sup> Remaining with the Old Testament, but returning to text rather than sound recording, the much earlier monograph by Stainer, *The Music of the Bible* (1879) provides some fifty thousand words of basic information on instruments not greatly dislodged by more recent work. These studies indicate only a fraction of that written on the subject.

Any difficulty in attempting to provide a description of the principal instruments available to players during the centuries of concern to this study would not include any shortage of illustrations in art. The previous (B.C.) centuries have left a rich heritage of examples, often remarkably detailed, of instruments whose evolution was not so rapid as to render these art works irrelevant as an accurate guide to what might be considered available for use in the music of early Christian worship. Literature too, offers substantial information concerning the construction of musical instruments. Added to this, surviving examples of ancient instruments, albeit often only fragments of instruments, have provided collaborative evidence that what is depicted in art, read about, or unearthed, can be quite accurately reproduced by modern makers of musical instruments such as referred to above. If the authenticity of performance is embellished by costume (sufficient evidence allows accurate reproduction in this field), a remaining problem prevents completion of the scene. Spectators might be provided with a rendition of what listeners (/viewers) heard in the region of two thousand years ago, but *how* music was heard and the perceptions linked to such hearing, remains impossible<sup>233</sup> – our hearing and understanding being attuned to the present day,<sup>234</sup> and such opinions as we may have, of times past. Study of such differences in hearing/experiencing music has multi-dissertation potential, but, for reasons of available space, must be considered beyond the remit of this study.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> See discography.

<sup>233</sup> Such insights as we have through ancient literature being communicable only through what may be *read*, not directly *heard*.

<sup>234</sup> A representative example may be seen in ‘the interval of the minor third, which once was experienced as discordant, and hence as “restless”, but is no longer heard as a discord because of changes in musical syntax’, Stephen Davies, *Musical Meaning and Expression* (Ithaca, 1994), p. 241.

<sup>235</sup> The subject is touched upon in Carol Harrison, *The Art of Listening in the Early Church* (Oxford, 2013).

A further problem remains, not in describing the instruments, where, in the main, a good level of certainty – or at least high probability – exists, but in attempting with a similar level of certainty or probability, to accurately name the described instrument. It is not unknown for ancient writers to treat lyre and harp as interchangeable terms, or to be inconsistent when naming and describing a particular member of the lyre/harp families. Perhaps more confusingly, translation into a modern language misleads when the translator decides which modern instrument most closely resembles an ancient one, and uses the name of that instrument to replace the old. Hence, the aulos is variously referred to as a flute, oboe, clarinet, or even bassoon. Maas and McIntosh Snyder warn of this, '[words] must be translated with great care, with the names of instruments ... left untranslated'.<sup>236</sup> The following paragraphs attempt to describe only the instruments in most common use, to which is added occasional comment on the technique of playing them.

### *Lyres and harps*

Commenting on the first and last of the copious illustrations in their study *Stringed Instruments of Ancient Greece*, Maas and McIntosh Snyder compare an early first century B.C. terra-cotta from Tarentum, depicting a seated harpist, illustrated at the start of their monograph, with the marble figure of a Cycladic harp and seated player, dating from around 2200 B.C. illustrated at the conclusion. Writing on the latter figure being 'so like the one with which we began', the authors conclude by stating, 'we could scarcely ask for a better symbol for the continuity of Greek musical culture through the vicissitudes of nearly two thousand years'.<sup>237</sup> Whilst the Maas and McIntosh Snyder study chronologically ends where this study begins, the stringed instruments explored describe in a general way the lyres and harps available to early Christian musicians, usable in any worship – domestic or public – in which they might participate. Whilst much of the descriptive material referred to above (and below) predates the Christian era, 'the general types of instruments used by the Greeks seem to have remained relatively stable over a long period of time'.<sup>238</sup> Such descriptions of instruments as are found in the writings of the Fathers are in no way

<sup>236</sup> Maas and McIntosh Snyder, *Musical Instruments*, p. 199.

<sup>237</sup> Maas and McIntosh Snyder, *Musical Instruments*, p. 188.

<sup>238</sup> Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, p. 285.

incompatible with the earlier evidence of art, literature, or archaeology examined in this study.

Stringed instruments of the lyre family were frequently (but not necessarily<sup>239</sup>) played with a plectrum.<sup>240</sup> The instruments could be used to play melodies or chords. Larger instruments, given a sufficient number of strings, could be used to perform melody combined with chords – the melody-playing hand possibly using a plectrum, the chord playing not (individual fingers being required to pluck the individual strings which combined produce the chord).<sup>241</sup> The size of the instrument and number of strings has varied during the course of its history. Some stringing changes have been evolutionary and entwined with the general development of music.<sup>242</sup> Other differences in construction reflect the various uses to which the instruments might be put. The basic construction of the smaller lyres (chelys lyre, and barbitos) is a tortoise-shell soundbox (Pausanias writes that Mount Parthenius provides the best tortoises for lyres, albeit with some associated difficulties in capturing them due to the ‘men of the mountain ... thinking them [tortoises] sacred to Pan<sup>243</sup>), to which are fixed two arms protruding upwards and linked by a crossbar. The fragility of such tortoise shell soundboxes, and (presumably), the difficulties encountered in obtaining them, led to the manufacture of instruments with wooden soundboxes.<sup>244</sup> The arms and crossbar are also made of wood<sup>245</sup> (sometimes hollowed, for acoustic advantage) – harder woods being preferred, as less likely to distort when under tension from the strings. Severe distortion might precipitate the collapse of the instrument, and even the slightest distortion would be detrimental to the stability of the instrument’s tuning. Internally the arms are fitted to the instrument’s base (which is the head end of the tortoise-shell), pass upwards through the hollow shell, emerging near the top, through

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<sup>239</sup> Michaelides, *Ancient Greece*, p. 191.

<sup>240</sup> Depiction in art often shows the use of a cord attached to a plectrum at one end, and the body of the instrument at the other. Many writers refer to the use of a plectrum in playing various lyres, e.g. Thucydides ‘at the touch of his golden plectrum’ in *In Apollinem* cited Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre*, p. 35, and Plato, in *Laws* (VII: 795a) writes ‘by horn-made plectrums’ cited Michaelides, *Ancient Greece*, p. 260.

<sup>241</sup> For illustration in sound, see discography, *Musica Romana*.

<sup>242</sup> The same, could of course be said of any period of history.

<sup>243</sup> Pausanias, *Description*, 8: 54.7.

<sup>244</sup> Solon Michaelides, *The Music of Ancient Greece* (London, 1978), p. 190. See comment below on larger lyres.

<sup>245</sup> Antelope horn was an alternative material for the arms of the lyre.

the opening for the animal's rear legs.<sup>246</sup> At the bottom end, the strings are attached to a *chordotonon* (in modern stringed instruments, the tailpiece) and at the upper end, to the crossbar. The exposed 'belly' side of the shell is covered with oxhide, perforated by a mesh of reeds to allow movement of air within the soundbox<sup>247</sup> and to provide strength and resonance to what is in effect the soundboard<sup>248</sup> of the instrument. Above this, the strings pass, supported by a wooden *magas* (bridge). The upper end of the strings are attached to pegs or other tuning device fitted to the crossbar, thereby enabling the tension of the strings, and consequent pitch of the notes produced, to be adjusted.<sup>249</sup> The construction of the larger lyres (phorminx, and kithara) was similar, except that the soundbox was wood (not tortoise shell), made in sections joined together. These larger lyres, especially the kithara were likely to be embellished with silver, gold, or ivory.

The skill of the performer, as well as type of use, might determine which of the four frequently encountered instruments of the lyre family might be selected. In domestic music making (likely to be accompanying song) the small and somewhat fragile chelys lyre, or the phorminx, having a tone quality of little carrying power, might be used. In Dionysian ceremonies, the larger and more resonant barbitos was commonly employed, whilst the great concert instrument used in contests, the theatre, and festivals associated with Apollo, was the kithara.

Greek harps were of triangular shape – for example the *trigonon* ('three cornered'). Literary sources indicate that harps were more commonly played by women than men.<sup>250</sup> It is unclear from such writing (for example the plays of Sophocles, Pherekrates, Eupolis) to what extent *trigonon* was a generic term used to describe any

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<sup>246</sup> Visualization might be assisted by the concept of the deceased tortoise standing on its head, its rear legs being replaced by the 'arms' of the lyre.

<sup>247</sup> Some instruments are depicted in art as having two holes (early examples of the sound holes common to the front – or 'belly' – of later stringed instruments), decorated with the appearance of human eyes.

<sup>248</sup> In later instruments made of wood.

<sup>249</sup> The subject of tuning pegs for the lyre is comprehensively addressed by Graeme Lawson, 'Representation and Reality in the Late Roman World: Some Conflicts between Excavated Finds and Popular Images of Panpipes, Lyres, and Lutes', Arno Adje Both, Ricardo Eichmann, Lars-Christian Koch (eds.), *Studies in Music Archaeology* 6 (2008), pp. 177-194.

<sup>250</sup> Maas and McIntosh Snyder, *Musical Instruments*, p. 150.



Greek harp, or to distinguish it from others, such as *magadis*, or *pektides*. Harps are played with the fingers (not a plectrum), by players who are seated and hold the instrument in such a way that its (wooden) soundbox is close to the player's body, and its longest strings farthest away. Art illustration indicates that a wooden bar is placed between the instrument and the player's knee – doubtless to prevent contact with the player's body from inhibiting the vibration of the instrument and consequent loss of resonance. The instruments could be used to play melodies and/or chords.

The Hebrews appear to have used not only the triangular harp, but also the Egyptian bow-shaped harp. The instrument referred to in the Old Testament as the kinnor<sup>251</sup> was possibly a harp, rather than a lyre – though historians are not unanimous in their opinions about this. The difficulty lies in whether, when David is said to play 'with his hand',<sup>252</sup> that implies plucking with the fingers, or with a plectrum held in the hand. The former might be argued as defining the kinnor as some form of harp, the latter a lyre. Definition is not helped by uncertainties regarding the extent to which the lyre may have been played with the fingers, rather than a plectrum, or indeed that the player may have plucked some notes with the left hand, and used a plectrum held in the right hand for others. A further consideration, advanced by at least one music historian,<sup>253</sup> is the possibility of the harpist pressing the plucked string on to the sound box, enabling, through a form of 'stopping', notes of more than one pitch to be obtained from the same string.<sup>254</sup>

The psaltery is generally regarded as played with the fingers, but A.J. Hipkins, suggests that the fingers may be covered 'with plectra adjusted like thimbles to produce a sharper sound'.<sup>255</sup> The delta shaped psaltery differed from the lyre family of instruments in that its soundbox was located in the upper part of the instrument, whilst in lyres it is lower. Basil writes:-

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<sup>251</sup> E.g. Genesis 4:21.

<sup>252</sup> I Samuel 16:23.

<sup>253</sup> Lise Manniche, *Music and Musicians in Ancient Greece* (London, 1991), p. 28.

<sup>254</sup> Depressing the string, by means of the finger(s) on to some solid part of the instrument (such as the fingerboard of the present day violin family of instruments, or fret board of the guitar), effectively shortening the portion of the string which is caused to vibrate when plucked, and thus obtaining notes of higher pitch than would be available without 'stopping'.

<sup>255</sup> A.J. Hipkins, *Musical Instruments* (London, 1945), p. 37.

...it [the psaltery] alone among musical instruments has the source of its sound in its upper parts ... this psaltery has the source of its harmonious strains from above, so that we too might be anxious to pursue higher things.<sup>256</sup>

### *Aulos (Tibia)*

The wind instrument most used, and most frequently written about by the Fathers<sup>257</sup> and in other literary sources,<sup>258</sup> is undoubtedly the aulos. It is also very often encountered in art, and archaeological remains of auloi provide a wealth of material for study.<sup>259</sup> References to the aulos included elsewhere in this study provide some indication of its history, pitch, tuning, and performance practice. As mentioned above, although some translators have referred to the aulos as a flute, the aulos is a reed instrument. Those translations substituting oboe for aulos, from a musical standpoint, also confuse, as, using Mathiesen's words, 'the aulos is an aulos and sounds nothing like any modern Western musical instrument'.<sup>260</sup>

That early auloi could be played in only one mode and that a new system enabling performance in several modes (attributed by Pausanias to Pronomius) was later devised, is also touched on elsewhere in this study. Illustrations in art – paintings, mosaics, bas-reliefs – would indicate that by the first century B.C. a level of mechanization had evolved to expand the intervallic patterns available, and to

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<sup>256</sup> Basil, *Homilia in psalmum i*, 2, *MECL*, p. 67.

<sup>257</sup> For example, Clement, Athanasius, Basil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Eusebius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Epiphanius of Salamis (and 1 Corinthians 14:7).

<sup>258</sup> The aulos is, for example, the subject of extended technical discussion in the writings of Aristotle, Aristoxenus, Theophrastus, and Ptolemy.

<sup>259</sup> Whilst most archaeological remains of auloi are fragments, complete or near complete examples can be seen in a number of locations, e.g. the Museum of Greek Archaeology at Reading University; the Louvre; the Danish National Museum in Copenhagen; the National Archaeological Museum at Naples; the National Archaeological Museum at Athens (Karpanos collection). See Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, pp.182-92. Also, a pair of auloi excavated in 1996 are housed in the Archaeological Museum at Thessaloniki, and another at the Archaeological Museum at Polyfyros, Chalkidike. See Stelios Psaroudakes, 'The Auloi of Pyona' in Arno Adje Both, Ricardo Eichmann, Ellen Hickman, Lars-Christian Kock (eds.), *Studies in Music Archaeology* 6 (2008), p. 197.

<sup>260</sup> Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, p. 182n. See discography for examples of the sound of the aulos and other instruments referred to in this study.

facilitate performance of the virtuosic music associated with the instrument.<sup>261</sup> By the fourth century A.D., the sophistication of such mechanisms is noted by the grammarian Arcadius observing a device enabling players ‘to stop or open the holes whenever they wished by turning them up and down, left and right’.<sup>262</sup> Pratinas of Phlius claimed that following technical changes to the aulos, auletes were inclined to overpower the singers they accompanied. He minced no words on ‘that spit-wasting, babbling, raucous reed, spoiling melody and rhythm.’<sup>263</sup>

Auloi were usually played in pairs, and art illustration most frequently depicts a ‘double-pipe’ instrument. The main body of the aulos (*bombyx*), in which the finger holes (*trupemata*) are located, is commonly made of reed, to which are attached two shorter sections of reed which comprise the mouthpiece (*hupholmion*, and *holmos*), from which protrudes the thin fragile reed (*glotta*) which is placed between the players lips. Alternatively, the bombyx may be made of hard wood, bone, horn, ivory, or brass.<sup>264</sup> As may be gathered from listening to the aulos,<sup>265</sup> it would seem that considerable force was needed to blow the instrument, and to assist this, the players would wear a leather band (*phorbeia*), fastened over the face, leaving two holes in front of the mouth, to insert the reeds, and prevent the lips from parting. Some art illustrations depict the pipes of the auloi being of equal length, whilst in other examples one is longer than the other. In the late second century A.D., Pollux wrote:-

And the nuptial aulema [was played on] two auloi, of which one was longer, and they constituted a concord; and those auloi played at banquets [are] small but both equal in length.<sup>266</sup>

How independently the two auloi were played is uncertain. Suggestion has been made that equal length auloi were played in unison, whilst in unequal pairs the longer

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

<sup>262</sup> Arcadius, Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, p. 191.

<sup>263</sup> Comotti, *Music in Greek and Roman Culture*, p. 30, cites a *hyporchema* (lyric sung by chorus to the accompaniment of vigorous dancing) of Pratinas of Phlius, as given in *Poetae melici Graeci*, ed. D.L. Page (Oxford, 1962), 708, referenced as 14.617b in Athenaeus' *Deinosophistas*. See Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophists*, tr. Charles Burton Gulick (Cambridge, Mass., 1941).

<sup>264</sup> Pollux (late second century A.D.), *Onomasticon* 4: 71, Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, p. 183.

<sup>265</sup> See discography.

<sup>266</sup> Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4: 80, Michaelides, *Ancient Greece*, pp. 43-4.

instrument provided a drone accompaniment to the melody of the shorter. But within any concept of music having independently moving parts, it may be unjust to the more virtuosic performers of the day to assume an inability to achieve this.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, some examples of pairs of auloi have identical finger hole spacing on the two pipes, whilst on others the spacing is different, suggesting a variety of possibilities regarding how the instrument could be used. The pipes, not bound together, but physically independent of each other, are each played with one hand of the performer fingering only one pipe.<sup>268</sup>

In the interest of tuning compatibility of the two auloi, Theophrastus advises that only those mouthpieces fashioned from the same reed section would be consonant.<sup>269</sup> This would seem to assume, however, that the reed section from which the two mouthpieces were made is consistent in dimension, texture, and density. Examples of auloi made of wood, bone, or metal are also known.<sup>270</sup> The necessity of tuning one aulos to the other, by adjustment of the mouthpiece, is described by Aristotle, Aristoxenus, and Plutarch, as well as the use of such devices being depicted in art.<sup>271</sup>

The aulos, or more correctly, many of its players would seem to be involved in such music as accompanied the most dubious morality, thereby provoking the virulent condemnation of the Fathers, for example 'the erotic wailing of the aulos',<sup>272</sup> and 'those castrations which the Phrygians perform, bewitched at first by the aulos'.<sup>273</sup> Being a versatile instrument, however, it could be put to many uses, one of which was in lamenting the dead. Its persistent use in this connection, by 'ordinary' Christians

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<sup>267</sup> The late Carl Dolmetsch used to demonstrate a similar possibility by playing recorder duets on two instruments simultaneously, fingering one with each hand.

<sup>268</sup> Psaroudakes, 'Auloi of Pyona', p. 197.

<sup>269</sup> Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, p. 212, citing Theophrastus (372-237 B.C.), who became successor to Aristotle at the Lyceum.

<sup>270</sup> Refer discography, especially *Musica Romana* and accompanying literature, p. 17.

<sup>271</sup> For example in a scene of Musaeus and the Muses painted on a red-figure amphora (ca. 440 B.C.), E 271 in the British Museum. See Mathiesen, *Apollo's Lyre*, pp. 212-3.

<sup>272</sup> Clement, *Paedagogus III, xi, MECL*, p. 34.

<sup>273</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration IV, *Contra Julianum I*, 70, *MECL*, p. 71.

would seem to have been particularly intransigent – so much so that objection by the Fathers appears to have eventually subsided.<sup>274</sup>

To whatever extent any ‘blanket’ disapproval by the Fathers of musical instruments in church can be inferred from their writings, that art depictions of musical instruments can be found in church buildings is well evidenced. Three examples of sixth century mosaics in Christian places of worship are listed by Bathyah Bayer in her archeological inventory *The Material Relics of Music in Ancient Palestine and its Environs*.<sup>275</sup> Each of these depicts a piper playing a single pipe instrument (as distinct from a pair of auloi). The locations are the nave of Church of St George, Nebo (Khirbet Mukhayyet); Church of St Lot and St Procopius, also at Nebo; the Monastery of the Lady Mary, Beth Shean.<sup>276</sup> That all three mosaics depict players of single pipe instruments, whilst in nearby locations (Beth Shean, and Qabr Hiram) not associated with Christian worship, floor mosaics of similar style and period depict players of double pipe instruments<sup>277</sup> may, or may not be coincidence rather than motivated by any negativity on the part of the Church, towards double, rather than single pipe, auloi.

### *Salpinx and horn*

The powerful salpinx and horn, initially the actual horns of animals, but later made from other materials such as metal or ivory, appear under various names in biblical and other writing. Whilst such instruments were of great value in Jewish or pagan sacrificial worship to drown out cries of pain or to drive out demons attracted by these cries,<sup>278</sup> Christian writing indicates their principal role as symbolic. For example (one of twenty-two occasions in the New Testament referring to the salpinx), Revelation 8: 6 states ‘Now the seven angels who had the seven *salpinges* made ready to blow

<sup>274</sup> Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, p. 40. Theodore S. de Bruyn, ‘Philosophical Council versus Customary Lament’ in Willi Braun (ed.), *Rhetoric and Reality in Early Christianities* (Waterloo, Ontario, 2005), pp. 176-9. Discussed elsewhere in this study.

<sup>275</sup> Bayhyah Bayer, *The Material Relics of Music in Ancient Palestine and its Environs* [Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon] (Tel-Aviv, 1963).

<sup>276</sup> Bayer, *Material Relics*, p. 20.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>278</sup> *MW*, p. 17.

them'. The *Sibylline Oracles* rejects 'the "trumpet", with its wild clamor'<sup>279</sup> and whilst not specifically indicted as frequently as some other musical instruments (such as the aulos), practical use of these powerful horns finds no favour with the Fathers. Players of the salpinx are often depicted in art as wearing the phorbeia, which presumably served a similar purpose as for the aulos.

### *Percussion*

The use of percussion instruments – drums, cymbals, rattles and bells<sup>280</sup> – to accompany sung Christian worship – both 'in church' and beyond – would seem particularly well documented; at least within the practices of some early Christianities described elsewhere in this study. The main purpose of such instruments is rhythmic rather than melodic, but that is the nature of most percussion, whatever the era. Augustine, for example, tells us that, desirous of supporting rhythmic pulse, presumably in a school-boy context of education common to pagan and Christian children alike, 'chorus-boys beat castanets and cymbals with their feet'.<sup>281</sup> We know from Theodoret that the Meletians incurred the displeasure of Athanasius because of:

... hand-clapping and a kind of dance, during which they sang hymns and shook little bells that were fastened on a piece of wood ... therefore the great Athanasius was continually fighting with them.<sup>282</sup>

Using instruments of this type, for example the sistrum, would seem to have persisted throughout Christian history.<sup>283</sup> The use of rattles and cymbals by Ethiopian

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<sup>279</sup> *MW*, p. 60.

<sup>280</sup> The bell is perhaps the musical instrument most frequently encountered in religious practice – Christian or other. Examples in pagan ritual would include use at the Saturnalicia and the Lupercalia, where the noise of the bells was believed to drive off demons and evil spirits – a belief not without some continuity in 'Christian' practice. Chrysostom complained that Christian mothers hung little bells as talismans around the necks of their children (Chrysostom, *In Colossenses*, Homily XII, 7, PG 61, 105/6, Quasten, *Music and Worship*, p. 29). In Jewish practice too, bells functioned as apotropaic and prophylactic devices. The priests robe, as described in Exodus 28. 34, has 'gold bells and pomegranates [symbol of life] alternately all round the lower hem'. Small bells attached to scraps of material have been found in Jewish graves (Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine*, p. 195) and sets of bells found in Christian graves (Quasten, *Music and Worship*, p. 159).

<sup>281</sup> Augustine, *On Music* (tr.) Robert Catesby Taliaferro, *The Fathers of the Church* (New York, 1947), p. 237.

<sup>282</sup> Theodoret, *Haereticarum fabularum compendium* 47, *MW*, p 98.

<sup>283</sup> Braun, *Music in Ancient Israel/Palestine*, pp. 98-9.

Christians in the early centuries of worship and beyond, is discussed elsewhere in this study. Theodoret also claims that ‘finger clappers’ are ‘dispensed with in the churches’.<sup>284</sup> Colourful sounds were produced by a variety of rattle-like instruments – the *seistron/sistrum* (also associated with the Egyptian cult of Isis<sup>285</sup>), *rhombos* (producing a roaring sound), *rhopton* and *tumpana* (used to make intimidating noises, beneficial in battle). The Celtic missionaries were particularly fond of bells, including those whose several faces, when struck externally, could produce a range of different notes. One of Adomnan’s bells, considered genuine, and dating within the time-span of this study, is housed in the museum at Kilmartin,<sup>286</sup> on Scotland’s west coast.

The Old Testament is clear on the use of cymbals in many religious ceremonies.<sup>287</sup> The Babylonian Talmud *Shebu* states that ‘the song of thanksgiving was [sung to the accompaniment of] lutes, lyres, and cymbals at every corner and upon every great stone in Jerusalem’.<sup>288</sup> In his commentary on Matthew, the use of cymbals in lamentation is mentioned by Chrysostom, ‘auloi and cymbals raising a dirge in the hour of her [<sup>289</sup>] death’.<sup>290</sup>

### *Hydraulis*

It is not uncommon for music historians to regard the hydraulis as a mechanized syrinx (Pan-pipes). Such description is consistent with Philo of Byzantium (280 B.C. to 220 B.C.), who referred to the hydraulis as ‘a syrinx played by the hands’.<sup>291</sup> The wind for the instrument was supplied by a piston pump, allegedly invented by Ctesibius in the third century B.C., and a constant wind pressure was maintained by the force of water displaced from a central chamber. A diagram describing the mechanics of the hydraulis is appended to this study. Whilst initially the hydraulis was an instrument of flue pipes blown with only light wind pressure, by the first

<sup>284</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus, *Quaestiones et responsiones ad orthodoxos* cvii, *MECL*, p. 107.

<sup>285</sup> Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre*, p. 172 citing Plutarch, *De Iside et Osiride* 63: 376c.

<sup>286</sup> See discography.

<sup>287</sup> Stainer, *Music of the Bible*, p. 173.

<sup>288</sup> Tal. Bab. *Shebu* 15b, Sendrey, *Music in Ancient Israel*, p. 222.

<sup>289</sup> The dead child referred in Matthew 9: 23-4.

<sup>290</sup> Chrysostom, *In Matthaëum*, Hom. 31: 2, *MECL*, p. 84.

<sup>291</sup> Philo of Byzantium, *Mechanicae syntaxis* 4:77, Mathiesen, *Apollo’s Lyre*, p. 226.

century A.D., higher wind pressure to activate metal pipes enabled a great volume of sound to be produced – sufficient for its highly effective outdoor use. The hydraulis was certainly used in pagan worship, and very effectively, if the text of a Greek inscription discovered on the island of Rhodes in 1903 is to be believed. One Marcus Aurelius Cyrus, priest of Bacchus-Dionysus, gave ‘360 denieri to the player of the water organ charged with awaking the god, and 100 [denieri] to those who sing the god’s praise’.<sup>292</sup> <sup>293</sup> Vitruvius writes of the hydraulis producing ‘resonant sounds in a great variety of melodies conforming to the laws of music ... it is carefully and exquisitely contrived in all respects’.<sup>294</sup> Athenaeus<sup>295</sup> describes the organ as producing ‘that fine and beautiful sound’<sup>296</sup>

The writings of the Fathers tend to describe the mechanics of the instrument rather than launching into vitriolic attack over its use. Tertullian goes so far as to speak of ‘that marvellous creation ... the hydraulis’ before commenting on ‘its many parts, sections, connections, passages – such a collection of sound, variety of tone, array of pipes’.<sup>297</sup> As mentioned earlier in this chapter, some Christian writing describes in complimentary terms the effect of hearing the hydraulis played. Theodoret of Cyrrus, writes of an instrument whose ‘brazen pipes are able to give forth, by the use of air or the touch of the fingers, a pleasant and rhythmic air’.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>292</sup> Perrot, *The Organ*, p. 56.

<sup>293</sup> Current research on the tuning of the sounding pipes of the hydraulis, discussed elsewhere in this study, to the extent that it can be obtained from the hydraulis fragments extant, could intimate whether or not modes which religious authority considered acceptable in sung Christian worship, coincide with any modes identifiable in the tuning of such pipes. Any coincidence of such modes, whilst not indicating that the instrument was used in Christian worship (the modes acceptable in Christian worship being by no means exclusive to that use) would at least leave open a door that incompatibility of mode would shut. The hydraulis discovered in 1931 at Aquin (near Budapest) appears to have sets of pipes tuned to four modes – the Lydian, Hypolydian, Phrygian, and Hypophrygian – and whilst the names of modes has not always been consistent, that these tunings include the Phrygian (called Dorian by Ambrose, as touched on earlier in this study), leave open avenues for further research.

<sup>294</sup> Vitruvius, tr. Morris Hicky Morgan, *Ten Books on Architecture by Vitruvius Pollio* (Stilwell, 2005), p.172.

<sup>295</sup> Athenaeus was born in Egypt around 160 A.D., wrote a fifteen volume *Deipnosophistae* (‘Experts at Dining’) which includes extensive material on musical instruments.

<sup>296</sup> Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 174a, Barker, *Greek Musical Writing*, p. 259.

<sup>297</sup> Tertullian, *De anima* xiv 4, *MECL*, p. 45.

<sup>298</sup> Theodoret of Cyrrus, Perrot, *The Organ*, p. 63, *PG LXXXIII*, 589-92.



The power of the organ to wake up sleepers is indicated by Isaac of Antioch, whose city monastery was besieged by the sound of musical instruments played nearby. He writes, 'On a certain day I was asleep, and snoring, when the hydraulis sounded loudly, so that I awoke with a start, and rose up with my brothers to perform our religious duties. And we came to the psalm which was to be recited at that hour ... but the music of the delightful hydraulis seduced my mind ... this music pleased me'<sup>299</sup> This incident is relevant because Isaac was well aware of the pagan use of the hydraulis, but did not on that account condemn it. Indeed he writes that 'the strings of the lyre of my soul had been released' by its music. Jerome mentions the power of an organ at Jerusalem which, he alleges, could be heard from the Mount of Olives.<sup>300</sup> It may be that Jerome is responding to (by Christianising) first century A.D. Talmudic literature, which indicates that a pipe organ used to call the priests and Levites to their duties was so powerful as to be heard as far away as Jericho.<sup>301</sup>

The evidence of mosaics and sarcophagi suggest an acceptance of the hydraulis (and its players) in public Christian worship that contrasts with the more usually encountered condemnation of musical instruments and musicians. An example may be seen in the hydraulic organ consistent with those constructed during the early A.D. centuries, depicted on a marble paving slab<sup>302</sup> unearthed at St Paul-Outside-the Walls, Rome.<sup>303</sup> This hydraulis depicting slab, which once formed part of the basilica's pavement, would hardly suggest antagonism towards the instrument. An inscription on the slab informs readers that Rusticus (presumably either an organist or builder of hydraulic organs) built this monument in his own lifetime. That deceased Christian players of the hydraulis were commemorated by depictions of the instrument on their sarcophagi, might also be seen as supporting any assertion concerning the acceptability of the hydraulis for use in Christian worship. The following three brief examples, taken from Perrot, *The Organ*, illustrate this:

*The St Maximin sarcophagus* – in the crypt of the basilica of St Maximin  
stands a very fine sarcophagus, dating from the period of Constantine ...

<sup>299</sup> Isaac of Antioch, mid-fifth century poem, Perrot, *The Organ*, p. 64.

<sup>300</sup> Grove, *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (Fifth Edition, 1954), VI, p. 284, citing *PL* XXX, 219.

<sup>301</sup> *Mishma Tamid* V,6, Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, p. 14.

<sup>302</sup> Perrot, *The Organ*, pp. 101-2, citing *Inscript. Christ. Urbis Romae* (Rome, 1935), ii, No. 5466.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, plate xv, following p. 116.

it represents a familiar Christian tableau, the resurrection of Tabitha, as related in the Acts of the Apostles (IX. 36-43) ... the most interesting aspect of this sculpture is that it shows an organ in a Christian mortuary. Perhaps Tabitha has been depicted in the guise of a dead woman who in life was an organist.

*The Sarcophagus of Julia Tyrrania* [church of St Honoras in the Alyscamps] ... whose name and virtues are recalled in an inscription ... pursued her studies primarily in the sphere of music and musical instruments. [Dated, so Perrot maintains, to the second/third century.]

*Gentilla's organ* ... a Christian inscription 'Gentilla in pace' ... refers to some woman who had plied the trade illustrated by the design ... a marble fragment found in the subterranean cemetery of Commodilla near Ostia. Sixteen pipes are clearly distinguishable ... this is a small table positive [organ] the favourite instrument of a Christian woman.<sup>304</sup>

The presence of organs in Western churches and cathedrals is well documented from the eighth century, and provides insight as to the specification of the instruments (number of pipes, bellows, etc). That it does not, however, in any instance, express surprise that an organ has been installed in a place of Christian worship, might be argued as suggesting a measure of normality over such installations. Amongst music historians arguing for at least 'occasional' use of the organ in Christian worship 'from the earliest centuries in the West' is Giulio Cattin.<sup>305</sup> Some continuity may be argued with the large organ of four hundred pipes and twenty-six pairs of bellows installed in Winchester Cathedral by Bishop Elfeg in 951. Although this dates well beyond the time-span of this study, to the extent that such an instrument can be assumed not to have appeared 'out of the blue', it must be considered the product of centuries of

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<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 100-3.

<sup>305</sup> Giulio Cattin, *Music of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 155.

development of organ manufacture associated with use in churches.<sup>306</sup> Indeed, as touched on elsewhere in this study, the *Annals of Fulda* record that an organ was sent to Pipin in 757 A.D. and another to Charlemagne in 812<sup>307</sup> for the purpose of supporting chanted psalms. The *Life of St Swithun* maintains that by the late tenth century, ‘organs’ reached a capacity requiring ‘seventy strong men [to] work, moving their arms and dripping with sweat’.<sup>308</sup> Marginally within the time period of prime concern to this study, however, Aldhelm of Malmesbury (d. 709), writing on seventh century England, refers to ‘hearing the great organs with a thousand breaths’.<sup>309</sup>

### *The body as symbolic musical instrument*

Before moving from discussion of musical instruments, some cognizance may not be inappropriately taken of the allegorical writings of the Fathers which present a concept of ‘body’ which, in a symbolic way, *is* a musical instrument. Such an instrument need not be seen as defiled by irreligious association. Indeed it is glorified, even to the extent that, in the words of Bruce W. Holsinger, ‘exegetes and illuminators see the body of Christ stretched so tightly on the cross that believers can pluck the passion upon his ribs and sinews’.<sup>310</sup>

Through what Holsinger refers to as ‘patristic fascination with the resonance of the flesh’<sup>311</sup> a concept emerges whereby ‘patristic Christianity discovers an extraordinary variety of ways to construct the body into a performance agent, a sonorous yet resolutely material instrument of flesh and bone’.<sup>312</sup> Hilary of Poitiers identifies the psalter, that ‘most upright of instruments’ as modelling the body of Christ, as ‘it is

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<sup>306</sup> Also in the tenth century, a monk of Ramsey writes of an organ which ‘with thunderous clamour incited the hearts of the faithful to praise the Name of the Lord’. A monk of Ramsey. *Life of St Oswald*, tr. Mary Berry, ‘What the Saxon Monks Sang: Music in Winchester in the late Tenth Century’, in Barbara Yorke (ed.), *Bishop Aethelwald: His Career and Influence* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 159.

<sup>307</sup> McKinnon, *Church Fathers*, p. 275.

<sup>308</sup> Wulfstan of Winchester, *Life of St Swithun*, James McKinnon, ‘The tenth century organ at Winchester’, James McKinnon, *The Temple, the Church Fathers, and Early Western Chant* (Aldershot, 1984), p. 22.

<sup>309</sup> Aldhelm of Malmesbury, *De virginitate*, McKinnon, ‘Organ at Winchester’, p. 8.

<sup>310</sup> Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture* (Stanford, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>311</sup> Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, p. 28.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

an instrument built in the shape of the Lord's body ... an instrument moved and struck from above and brought to life to sing of supernal and heavenly teaching'.<sup>313</sup> Such passages may be seen as rooted in classical concepts depicting musical performance of the body. Cicero, for example, wrote 'the whole of a person's body and every look on his face and utterance of his voice are like the strings of a harp, and sound according as they are struck by each successive emotion ... for the tones of the voice are keyed up like the strings of an instrument'.<sup>314</sup>

Gregory of Nyssa goes to some length to equate instrumental concepts with the human body in what Holsinger describes as 'one of the most stunning meditations on the musicality of the human body to survive from late antiquity'.<sup>315</sup>

Now the music of the human instrument is a sort of compound of flute and lyre, sounding together in combination as in a concerted piece of music. For the breath – as it is forced up from the air-receiving vessels through the windpipe, when the speaker's impulse to utterance attunes the harmony to sound, and as it strikes against the internal protuberances which divide this flute-like passage in a circular arrangement – imitates in a way the sound uttered through a flute, being driven round and round by the membranous projections. But the palate receives the sound from below in its own concavity, and dividing the sound by two passages that extend to the nostrils, and by the cartilages about the perforated bone, as it were by some scaly protuberance makes its resonance louder; while the cheek, the tongue, the mechanism of the pharynx by which the chin is relaxed when drawn in, and tightened when extended to a point – all these in many different ways answer to the motion of the plectrum upon the strings, varying very quickly, as occasion requires, the arrangement of the tones; and the opening and closing of the lips has the same effect as players produce when they check the breath of the flute with their fingers according to the measure of the tune.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Hilary of Poitiers, *Instructio psalmorum* 7, *MECL*, p. 123.

<sup>314</sup> Cicero, *De oratore*, Holsinger, *Body, Mind, and Desire*, p. 44.

<sup>315</sup> Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, p. 50.

Holsinger brings to our attention that such writing as the above reveals the legacy of patristic theology not as uniformly hostile to the body, but as ‘deeply aware of the musicality of human flesh’.<sup>317</sup> The mind, too, ‘a thing intelligible and incorporeal’ is portrayed instrumentally ‘that it might, like a plectrum, touch the vocal organs and indicate by the quality of the notes struck, the motion within’.<sup>318</sup>

### ***Religious dance.***

Whilst the subject of dance occurs throughout this study, engagement with specific points may not be inappropriate at this juncture. There would seem to be little doubt, that from earliest Christian times, dance was an important element in worship.<sup>319</sup> It has been argued<sup>320</sup> that Mat. 11:17 and Luke 7:32 are an invocation to adoration in the form of dance – ‘we have piped for you – and you have not danced’. Such attacks on dance as came from the Fathers, mostly in the fourth century, were directed at theatrical dancing, festive pagan dancing, or at perceived abuses in religious dance,<sup>321</sup> not at religious dance *per se*, although difficulties of distinction concerning what did or did not resemble theatre dancing or pagan festive dancing, doubtless engendered instances of blanket disapproval. In his work *On Repentance*, Ambrose clearly condemns the ‘actor-like movements of indecent dances’,<sup>322</sup> but any attempt to see this as an outright condemnation of dance would hardly square with his instruction that ‘the dance should be conducted as did David when he danced before the Ark of the Lord’.<sup>323</sup> The passage continues, ‘for this reason the dance must in no wise be regarded as a mark of reverence for vanity and luxury, but as something which uplifts every living body’. In similar vein, in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke,

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<sup>316</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 9: 3 *NPNF* Second Series 5, pp. 394-5.

<sup>317</sup> Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire*, p. 50.

<sup>318</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Making of Man* 9: 1 *NPNF* Second Series 5, p. 395.

<sup>319</sup> Murray Silberling, *Dancing for Joy: A Biblical Approach to Praise and Worship* (Baltimore, 1995), pp. 18-19.

<sup>320</sup> E. Louis Backman, *Religious Dances* (Westport, 1977 [1952]), p. 14.

<sup>321</sup> That canons promulgated at successive councils might be seen as indicating that the attempted suppression was less than totally effective – e.g. Elvira c. 33-303 (concerning the graves of martyrs); Toledo c. 539 (dancing whilst waiting for the commencement of church processions); Auxerres c. 573-603 (forbidding nuns to participate in choir dances); Toledo c. 633 (against the ‘Festival of Fools’ with music and dance in churches). See Blackman, *Religious Dance*, p. 155

<sup>322</sup> Ambrose, *On Repentance*, 6: 42, *NPNF* Second Series 10.

<sup>323</sup> Ambrose, *On Repentance*, 6: 42, *NPNF* Second Series 10.

Ambrose writes that Scripture ‘enjoins us to dance wisely’.<sup>324</sup> From this, Backman argues that whilst immodest dance is totally unacceptable, expressed positively, solemn church dance is a commended form of worship.

It may not be irrelevant to note that scholarship focused on religious dance is reluctant to ascribe a purely allegorical interpretation<sup>325</sup> to some passages written by the Fathers, where specific dance steps, for example the ‘round dance’ (*Chorea*), or ‘hop dance’ (*Saltatio*), are mentioned. Backman writes, ‘This vivid imagery cannot be interpreted otherwise than as the consequence of actual dances inside the church’.<sup>326</sup> Doug Adams writes, ‘Recent critical scholarly methods allow distinction between actual dance and metaphorical’.<sup>327</sup> Certainly Hal Taussig’s 1977 study, *Dancing in the New Testament*, referred to later in this chapter, clearly identifies passages where actual dance would seem to be implied.

The apocryphal Acts of John, dating from around 150 to 180 A.D.,<sup>328</sup> describe the Last Supper as concluding with a ring dance, Jesus at the centre, - ‘He bade us therefore make, as it were, a ring, holding one another’s hands, and, himself standing in the midst’.<sup>329</sup> The accompanying hymn,<sup>330</sup> as given in the Act of John, includes considerable allusion to dance, and to instrumental music:

Grace dances in the round-dance.

I will play upon the flute, let all dance. Amen.

I will complain, let all complain. Amen.

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<sup>324</sup> Ambrose, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Backman, *Religious Dance*, p. 27, *PL*. XV 1670, 1679,

<sup>325</sup> Arguing that actual steps danced in church which provide material for allegorical construction, also imply a literal meaning.

<sup>326</sup> Bachman, *Religious Dances*, p. 24.

<sup>327</sup> Doug Adams and Diane Apostolos Cappeladona, *Dance as Religious Studies* (Eugene, 1993), p. 213.

<sup>328</sup> Johannes Quasten, *Patrology I* (Westminster, Maryland, 1984 [1950]), p. 135.

<sup>329</sup> M.R. James, ‘Acts of John’, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 253. See also, Daniels, *Dance in Christianity*, p. 14.

<sup>330</sup> van der Leeuw writes, ‘the most eloquent example of such a dance of mystic contemplation is the image of the dancing Christ, which was current in Gnostic circles during the early centuries of our era. The movement of God’s love in Christ is apprehended as a dance which Christ performs with his twelve disciples’. See van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art* (New York, 1963), p. 29, quoted Kimerer L. LaMothe, *Between Dancing and Writing* (New York, 2004), p. 198.

The unique eight (the ogdoade) sing praises with us. Amen.

The twelve on high dance their ring-dance. Amen.

It is the duty of all to dance on high. Amen.

Who dances not, knows not what will happen. Amen.<sup>331</sup>

Whatever the authenticity of this account of dancing at the Last Supper, 'it illustrates that this type of dance was part of the religious expression of the early Church'.<sup>332</sup> As indicated earlier, similar comments on this passage are made by Christopher Page.<sup>333</sup> Whilst much evidence illustrates the continuity (or at least frequent reappearance) of liturgical ring dancing throughout the centuries of Christian worship, examples dating after 680 A.D. lie beyond the remit of this study.<sup>334</sup>

Just as 'whirling', more commonly associated with later Dervishes, has been briefly touched on in the context of early Christian 'whirling', so the dancing of Ethiopian priests to the drumming of deacons, as noted by later travellers to that country, is argued by many music and dance historians<sup>335</sup> to be rooted in practices dating from the early Ethiopian Church. This in turn begs comment as to the origins of its introduction to Ethiopian Christian worship. That an especial propensity and desire to dance is demonstrable in many African races may not be without relevance.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>331</sup> Acts of John, Backman, *Religious Dance* p. 15. See also M.R. James, *Apocryphal New Testament*, p. 253.

<sup>332</sup> Daniels, *Dance in Christianity*, p. 16. See also, G.R.S. Mead, *The Sacred Dance in Christendom* (London, 1926), p. 65.

<sup>333</sup> James McKinnon, however, relegates such a viewpoint to the status of 'loose speculation on the early Christian attitude towards dance'. See *MECL*, p. 25. On this remark of McKinnon, Christopher Page, in *The Christian West and its Singers: The First Thousand Years* (Yale, 2010), p. 10, writes, 'the days of the late 1980s, when James McKinnon repudiated the 'loose speculation' of those seeking to extend the significance of Christ's dance in the *Acts of John*, now seem very far away'.

<sup>334</sup> On ring dancing in a twentieth century monastic context, see Marilyn Daniels, *The Dance in Christianity: A History of Religious Dance Throughout the Ages* (New York, 1981), pp. 73-84.

<sup>335</sup> For example, Alex Robertson, *Music of the Catholic Church* (London, 1961), p. 26; Curt Sachs *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World* (New York, 1943), p. 81; *World History of the Dance* (New York 1963); on ecstatic dance in the early Churches, Barbara Ehrenreich, *Dancing in the Streets: A History of Collective Joy* (New York, 2006), pp. 64-76.

<sup>336</sup> An anecdotal illustration is that given by John Scofield, who writes of witnessing 'an improvised conga step to the rhythm of a diesel engine with a faulty exhaust valve: one, two, three, BUMP!' John Scofield, 'Freedom Speaks Frence in Ojagodougou', *National Geographic* 130 (August, 1966), 198.

Amongst examples of dance in Christian worship which seem to have persisted throughout the centuries, is the dancing procession of Echternach in Germany. This originated little more than a half century beyond the time-line of this study, and venerates in dance, Willibrord (born in Northumbria, in 658 A.D.), who died in Echternach in 739. Tradition has it that dancing began at Willibrord's grave, and was accompanied by musical instruments.<sup>337</sup>

Nearer the northern extremities of Christendom, that the Saxon Church in England was sympathetic to liturgical dance is suggested in a Saxon sculpture in Peterborough cathedral. This was discovered in 1883 restoration work, and is believed to have survived the 870 A.D. destruction of the mid seventh century original monastic church. The sculpture depicts two bishops in liturgical dance.<sup>338</sup>

### 3. Occasion.

#### *Commemorating the dead.*

Amongst the attempted objectives of this study is that of identifying locations and situations, not necessarily confined within the boundaries of the Roman empire, where, in the context of Christian worship, music (instrumental as well as vocal) and dance may be said to have formed an integral part. In many instances this may be through the resistance of 'ordinary' Christians to the condemnatory attitudes of their elite spiritual betters.<sup>339</sup> In other locations (for example Ireland) an apparent moral neutrality attached to musical activity seems not to have attracted its condemnation or

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<sup>337</sup> Alex Langini, *The Dancing Procession at Echternach* (Echternach, 2012), p. 17. Evidence confirming continuance of the Echternach dancing procession increases with the passage of time. Berno of Reichenau provides mid eleventh century support (Langini, *Dancing Procession*, p. 31). In 2010, the dancing procession of Echternach was inscribed by Unesco on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

<sup>338</sup> Jack Higham, *Peterborough Cathedral* (Peterborough 1990), p. 13.

<sup>339</sup> As Richard Hanson writes, 'When we turn, however, from the works of the Christian theologians up to the time of Constantine, who were almost all intellectuals, and look at the habits and behaviour of ordinary Christian people ... it is quite clear that many pagan religious customs and habits were carried on into the practice of Christianity', Hanson, *Studies in Christian Antiquity*, p. 201.



suppression. In yet other locations (for example Ethiopia), in a continuation from earliest Christian worship in that country (one of the first to officially embrace Christianity), vocal and instrumental music, and dance, appear to be essential elements in the expressed devotion of its adherents.

Ceremonial surrounding the dead – whether the lately, or long-since, dead – is an area rich in historical evidence. For the Church, it is also an area in which disentanglement from pagan ritual – of which instrumental music is an integral part – proved somewhat problematic. The problems were exacerbated when church leaders, through the passage of time, displayed inconsistencies concerning what was, and was not, permissible. As Johannes Quasten writes, ‘If anyone dared to try to take away these customs the people would continually invoke their rights and the antiquity of the customs’, claiming that ‘Those who did not forbid it before were also Christians’.<sup>340</sup> Quasten cites an example from as late as the seventh century, when Bishop Eligius of Noyon, having criticized the music and dancing with which the vigil of the Apostle Peter had been celebrated, was told, ‘As much as you wish to preach, Roman, you will not succeed in destroying our ancient customs’.<sup>341</sup> It was maintained by some Christians that martyrs were pleased by music and dancing. Quasten quotes a homily given shortly after 363 on the feast of the martyr Polyeuctus, ‘But what gift shall we present to the martyr, what would be worthy of him? ... If it pleased him we will perform our customary dances in his honour’.<sup>342</sup> The ‘ring dance’ is mentioned by Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-c.390) as a means of honouring the martyrs and celebrating Easter:

If we assemble to celebrate this festival in such a way that it shall be agreeable to Christ and at the same time honour the martyrs, then we must execute our triumphant ring dance. Great throngs of people must perform a ring dance for the martyrs in reverent honour of their precious blood.<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>340</sup> *MW*, p. 175.

<sup>341</sup> *MW*, citing C.F. Arnold, *Caesarius von Arelate* (Leipzig, 1894), p. 177.

<sup>342</sup> *MW*, p. 175, citing B. Aube, *Homelie inedite, Polyeucte dans l'Histoire* (Paris, 1882), p. 79.

<sup>343</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, Margaret Fisk Taylor, *A Time to Dance: Symbol Movement in Worship* (Philadelphia, 1967), p. 76, citing C.H. Bromel, *Fest-Tantze der ersten Christen* (Jena, 1701).

Eusebius, believing the Therapeutae described by Philo to be Christians, whether or not ‘the first of them really called themselves so’,<sup>344</sup> identifies their music and dance practices as being very similar to the customs and traditions with which he was familiar. Philo’s description of the night-long festival, with which Eusebius identified such similarities, reads:

And this is how they keep it ... [they] chant hymns composed in God’s honour in many metres and melodies, sometimes singing together, sometimes one *choros* beating the measure with their hands for the antiphonal chanting of the other, now dancing to the measure and now inspiring it, at times dancing in procession, sometimes set-dances, and then circle-dances right and left.<sup>345</sup>

But the balance of comment by the Fathers favours the negative. Ephraem (c.306-c.373), whose stance on the use of musical instruments can be argued as somewhat moderate, nonetheless exhorted his listeners, regarding commemoration of martyrs, ‘Let us not celebrate as the pagans do, but as Christians. Let us not wreath the doors, let us not perform dances and enervate our sense of hearing with the music of flute and cithara’.<sup>346</sup> Basil the Great complained that the Easter vigil was defiled by women dancing ‘in the martyr’s shrines ... making of those places a workshop of their characteristic indecency’.<sup>347</sup> Augustine (c.354-c.430) questioned ‘did not the establishment of these vigils in the name of Christ bring it about that citharas be banished from this place?’<sup>348</sup> Clearly, the criticism of Augustine and Ephraem can be taken as indication that the dances to which they objected were not infrequently accompanied by musical instruments.

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<sup>344</sup> Eusebius, *HE*, 2: 17.

<sup>345</sup> Philo, *The Contemplative Life*, 11, *WPC*, pp. 705-6.

<sup>346</sup> Ephraem, *Depoenitentia et iudicio*, quoted Quasten, *Music and Worship*, p. 175. That this passage should not be taken as indicating Ephraem’s total opposition to the use of musical instruments in worship, is discussed earlier.

<sup>347</sup> Basil The Great, *Homilia in ebrioses* i, *MECL*, p. 70, *PG XXXI*, 445.

<sup>348</sup> Augustine, *In psalmum* 32: 2, *MELC*, p. 156, *PL XXXVI*, 279.

Basil mentions ‘auloi and drums as suitable for the performance of ritual funeral music’<sup>349</sup> and such ritual is likely to have included dance. As Alexiou brings to our attention, ‘archaeological and literary evidence, taken together, makes it clear that lamentation involved movement as well as wailing and singing ... the scene must have resembled a dance, sometimes slow and solemn, sometimes wild and ecstatic’.<sup>350</sup> Conflict between officially sanctioned psalms and the spontaneous lamentation of the people,<sup>351</sup> at the funeral of Basil the Great in 379, is described by Gregory Nazianzen (c.329-c.389):-

There were crowds of people everywhere, in the market places, arcades, and buildings two and three stories high, all attending his funeral and walking behind, in front and alongside, trampling one another. Thousands of people of every race and age, not known before, psalms giving way to lamentation, and philosophy overcome by passion. It was a struggle between our followers and the outsiders – Greeks, Jews and immigrants ... and the body itself only just escaped their clutches.<sup>352</sup>

But the brother of Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa (c.330-c.395), in his *Vita* of their sister ‘Macrina the Younger’ (c.327-c.380), writes of her funeral rites in terms which might well be seen as well expressing the mergence of old and new ritual:

... as the psalmody of the virgins, mingled with lamentation, was heard about the place ... the crowd of men and women who had come together from the entire region, broke in on the psalmody with their loud wailing ... so I separated the assembled people ... and mixed the crowd ... bringing it about that one coordinated and harmonious psalmody resulted.<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>349</sup> Backman, *Religious Dance*, p. 41.

<sup>350</sup> Alexiou, *The ritual lament*, p. 6.

<sup>351</sup> Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge, 1974), p. 30

<sup>352</sup> Gregory Nazianzen, *In laudem Basilii Magni* 52, Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament*, p. 30, PG XXXVI, 601.

<sup>353</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita Macrinae Junioris* 33, MECL, pp. 73-4., PG XLVI, 992.

If the protestations of the Fathers, on the evils of lamentation, ‘with the customary instruments and the voices of the mourners’,<sup>354</sup> became less frequent and less vehemently heard, ‘this was hardly because they had been eradicated, rather that the ritual had been absorbed into Christianity’.<sup>355</sup>

### ***Celebrating the living.***

#### *Weddings.*

On the whole, it seems that the early Church ‘had no distinctive Christian ritual for the celebration of marriage’<sup>356</sup> – rather it accepted customary forms of marriage among the various peoples who had embraced the gospel. Although clergy sometimes attended weddings and blessed the union, this was not mandatory.<sup>357</sup> As long as the demographic centre of the early Christian communities was Palestine, the marriages of Christians, their motives, and experience of married life would be Jewish in social structure.<sup>358</sup> Music making was customary at Jewish weddings, and ‘was retained even after the destruction of the Second Temple, while other music was prohibited as a sign of mourning, for the rabbis considered it essential to a wedding’.<sup>359</sup> It would seem more likely than not that such communities would retain the inclusion of music in their ceremonies, after Christian conversion.<sup>360</sup>

As the proportion of Jewish converts in first and second generation Christian communities diminished and the proportion of Gentiles grew, the motives, experience, and structure became that of the Hellenistic-Roman civilization of the time. Marriage in Roman law being monogamous, procreative, and with an implied duty of conjugal love, the Church, whilst adding its own formulations regarding indissolubility, found

<sup>354</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, 9: 8.10, *NPNF*, Second Series, 1.

<sup>355</sup> Alexiou, *Ritual Lament*, p. 29.

<sup>356</sup> John P. Beal (ed.), *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York, 2000), pp. 1325-6.

<sup>357</sup> Only from the Tridentine decree *Tametsi* of 1563 has there been the requirement of a religious rite for the valid celebration of marriage. Local church custom, however, from an earlier date, might require the presence of a priest at a wedding, i.e. in Northumbria, local written law required this from a tenth century promulgation by King Edmund (reigned 940-46). See B. Thorpe, *Ancient Laws and Institutes of England* (London, 1840), p. 109.

<sup>358</sup> Theodore Mackin, *What is Marriage?* (New York, 1982), p. 69.

<sup>359</sup> Idelsohn, *Ceremonies*, p. 127.

<sup>360</sup> Gregory of Nyssa would seem to indicate in *inscriptions* 1: 3: 17 that psalms were sung at ‘both banquets and wedding festivities’.

concepts which it could easily accept.<sup>361</sup> The presence of priests at weddings is addressed by the fourth century Council of Laodicea,<sup>362</sup> which also confirms the presence of musicians by directing that the former depart before the arrival of the latter: 'Priests or clerics of whatever rank must not look upon the spectacles at weddings, or at banquets, but they must arise and depart from there before the entry of the musicians'.<sup>363</sup> Whether the musicians played any part in the pre-banquet proceedings is not clear. The same council, in canon 53, states that 'those Christians attending weddings ought not to leap and dance, but rather partake respectfully of the luncheon or dinner as befits Christians'.

That condemnation nonetheless left room for the legitimate use of dance is indicated by Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-c.389), 'If you must dance, as one who attends festivals and loves to celebrate, then dance; but not that dance of the shameful Herodias, which resulted in the death of the Baptist, but rather that of David as the Ark was being brought to its resting place, which I consider to be a sign of lithe and agile walking in God'.<sup>364</sup> Certainly Gregory of Nyssa implies that Christians celebrated banquets and weddings by singing psalms – 'banquets and wedding festivities include ... as a part of the rejoicing in their celebrations ... enthusiastic hymn singing'.<sup>365</sup> Examples of the condemnation of instrumental music at weddings is found in Chrysostom (c.374-c.407), 'What need is there of dancing ... why do you introduce such a pagan uproar ... where flutists are, Christ is not'.<sup>366</sup>

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<sup>361</sup> It could be noted, that in the drafting of Roman law, a model of defining marriage was created, which was borrowed almost verbatim, some sixteen centuries later, following the Second Vatican Council. 'Marriage, or matrimony is a union of a man and a woman, a union involving a single sharing of life' – attributed to Domitius Ulpianus (d. 228 A.D.), quoted Mackin, *Marriage*, P. 73, and located in *Instituta* i,9,1. of Justinian. 'Marriage is a union of a man and a woman, and a community of the whole life, a participation in divine and human law'. – attributed to the jurist Herennius Modestinus (d. 244 A.D.), also quoted Mackin, *Marriage*, p. 73, and located in *Digesta* xxxiii,2,I, of Justinian.

<sup>362</sup> The Council presumably wishing to bring about what was not necessarily existing practice; John Chrysostom (c.347-c.407), complains of resistance by Christians to clergy at weddings. See *Hom.* 48.vi in *Gen.* 23: v-vi; 54.443, cited Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric in the Late 4<sup>th</sup> Century* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>363</sup> Council of Laodicea, canon 54.

<sup>364</sup> Gregory of Nazianzus, *Contra Julianum* 2: 35, *MECL*, p. 71.

<sup>365</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Treatise on the Inscriptions of the Psalms* 17 (tr.) Ronald E. Hein (Oxford, 1995), p. 88.

<sup>366</sup> John Chrysostom, *Homilia* 12, 5, in *Epist ad Colossenses* IV, 12, *MW*, p. 182. A not incompatible scene, in which a 'flute-girl broke her flute, and cast it away' is depicted a century earlier in a passage from the (third century) Acts of Thomas, when the apostle, attending a wedding in Andrapolis, seems unphased by the attentions of a flute-girl who 'stood over him and played at his head for a long space'.

*Victories, celebrations, and relief from pestilence.*

With the conversion of Constantine, and more especially Theodosius' late fourth century adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the state, official ceremonies very gradually assumed a Christian significance not devoid of elements of 'worship'. Such ceremony might be an offering of thanks to God, in a celebratory ceremony following the winning of a military victory or the attainment of an anniversary. Eusebius writes that 'with processions and hymns of praise they ... ascribe the supreme sovereignty to God ... and then with continued acclamations rendered honour to the victorious emperor.'<sup>367</sup> Of the same victory, in 323/4, Eusebius also writes of celebrating the perceived fortunate consequences - 'enjoyment of present happiness ... mingled with expectation of blessings in the future'<sup>368</sup> and that 'both in the country and in the towns, people wanted above all to inform God, the King of Kings, of the victory by the performances of dances and the singing of hymns'.<sup>369</sup> As, by this time, considerable condemnation of dancing had been expressed by some of the Fathers, it can, perhaps, be assumed that the dancing of which Eusebius writes occurs despite opposition (were it politic to voice opposition under such circumstances) from ecclesiastical authority. Such dancing may of course have been totally impromptu 'dancing in the streets', rather than structured ceremony. Either way, the accompaniment of musical instruments can be considered a likely possibility, considering a cultural heritage well used to 'processions through the town or countryside, perhaps to the accompaniment of music',<sup>370</sup> or even more positively, where 'Bands played various wind instruments and every sort of drum, while even the

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Indeed she followed him back to his lodging and was later found 'weeping and afflicted because he had not taken her with him'. But this flute-girl, being Hebrew had (unlike many of the wedding guests) understood all that he had said and believed him to be 'a god or an apostle of God'. See M.R. James, tr. 'Acts of Thomas', *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford, 1926), pp. 367, 371, and 368 respectively. Regarding the Gnostic context of the Acts of Thomas, as touched on earlier, the 'orthodoxy' of texts is not a prerequisite of inclusion within the broad concept of 'Christian worship' examined in this study.

<sup>367</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, ii. 19.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, ii. 19.

<sup>369</sup> Eusebius, *HE* 10: 9, cited Backman, *Religious Dance*, p. 23. Backman incorrectly cites this as *Life of Constantine*.

<sup>370</sup> A.D. Lee, 'Traditional Religions', in Noel Lenski (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine* (Cambridge, 2006), p. 163.

smaller villages tried to hire themselves a “symphony” by binding travelling performers to a contract’.<sup>371</sup>

It should not be thought that ceremonial and attendant feasting, were necessarily rejected by those of high ecclesiastical rank. The festivities initiating the twentieth year of Constantine’s imperial reign (325 A.D. – shortly after the conclusion of the Council of Nicaea), included a magnificent banquet to which the bishops were invited and willingly attended. Eusebius describes this as a vision ‘foreshadowing the Messianic Banquet in the Kingdom of Christ’.<sup>372</sup> It may be safe to assume, despite a vehement opposition to instrumental music, that the occasion was not totally devoid of music (albeit perhaps adapted to the sensitivities of the assembled company<sup>373</sup>).

Important works offering insight into the world of Byzantine ceremonies, *De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae*, attributed, at least in part, to Constantine (VII) Porphyrogenitus; *De Officiis Constantinopolitanis*, ascribed to Codinus Curopalata; *De Ordine Sepulturae*, by Symeon, archbishop of Thessaloniki, whilst written considerably later<sup>374</sup> than the period examined in this study, provide a stream of information concerning events from the late fifth century onwards.<sup>375</sup> The possibility is by no means precluded that elements of ceremonial from later centuries existed in

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<sup>371</sup> Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, p. 67.

<sup>372</sup> Charles Matson Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (London, 2004), pp. 202-3.

<sup>373</sup> It may be presumed that Constantine was well accustomed to entertaining (fellow) Christians; indeed his court may have consisted entirely of Christians (Jacob Burckhardt, *The Age of Constantine the Great*, (( London 2007, [German 1853])), p. 284), but diverse scholarly opinion, both regarding the balance of power between Constantine and the Church, and the balance of his Christian/pagan convictions, leaves the imagination fairly free of hard facts, when construing the scene of any such banquets.

<sup>374</sup> The earliest of these works, *De Cerimoniis*, dating from the mid-tenth century, the other two, *De Officiis* and *de Ordine* dating around 1453 and 1420 respectively.

<sup>375</sup> Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus (905-959; emperor 913-959) in his treatise *De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* provides an official account of imperial ceremonial, which, as C.N. Tsirpanlis writes, ‘laboriously summarizes and preserves ... many older sources as well as traditional court ceremonies’ (C.N. Tsirpanlis, ‘The Imperial Coronation and Theory in *De Cerimoniis aulae Byzantinae* of Constantine VII Porphyrogennitus’ in *Kleronomia* 4, 1972, pp. 63). The ceremonial entwining of Church and State are evidenced from at least the time of the coronation ceremony of Marcian, in 450 A.D. By this time, as Tsirpanlis states, ‘the acclamations of soldiers and people have assumed a definitely religious and Christian colouring’ (Tsirpanlis, ‘Imperial Coronation’, p. 82. On the preservation of earlier accounts, see also F.E. Brightman, ‘Byzantine Imperial Coronations’ in *The Journal of Theological Studies* II (1901), p. 368.

the earlier.<sup>376</sup> From the accounts given in the three works, it is arguable that on specific occasions, musical instruments were used in Christian worship – and sometimes that they were used ‘in church’. Amongst music historians to cite these works, Egon Wellesz describes ‘the use of instruments in secular and ecclesiastical celebrations’.<sup>377</sup> Of a ceremony on Christmas Eve,<sup>378</sup> Wellesz writes, ‘instruments accompanied the singers ... the players stood behind the clergy ... the singers, accompanied by all the various instruments, intoned the *Polychronion*. When the singers had finished their hymn of praise the instruments continued to play for a while until the Emperor, waving a handkerchief, gave the sign to cease’.<sup>379</sup> Other examples include hymns to the Holy Trinity being sung and played on the day before the chariot-races in the Hippodrome, and the entertaining of foreign ambassadors in the octagonal reception-hall of the Imperial Palace, when the choirs of Hagia Sophia and Holy Apostles would sing hymns with ‘portable organs and other instruments.’<sup>380</sup>

*The common meal, domestic and communal worship.*

Of the positions taken on whether Temple or synagogue exercised stronger influence over the form of early Christian worship, James McKinnon would appear firmly rooted in argument favouring the synagogue. In the abstract of his 1965 dissertation, he writes clearly enough, that the absence of musical instruments results ‘from the simple fact that instruments had no function in the unique services of the Synagogue... the Synagogue’s rites were absorbed into the early Christian Mass ... The polemic [against musical instruments] did not develop until the third and fourth centuries, and therefore came into existence long after the basic Christian musical practices and attitudes had been established’.<sup>381</sup> By 2000, however, scholarship was much less sure about the widespread adoption of synagogue practice. Paul F.

<sup>376</sup> It might be added that the ninth to fifteenth centuries - the central focus of the cited works – were also labeled (by those who so argue) as being without instrumental music in worship. That it clearly did exist at these times in no way diminishes a similar possibility regarding earlier centuries.

<sup>377</sup> Wellesz, *Byzantine Music*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>378</sup> This account is also cited in H.J.W. Tillyard, ‘The Acclamations of Emperors in Byzantine Ritual’ in *The Annual of the British School in Athens* XVIII (1911-12), pp. 239-40.

<sup>379</sup> Wellesz, *Byzantine Music*, p. 104, citing *De Officiis, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinorum*, pp. 43-55. See earlier footnote.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-7, and 101 respectively, citing *De Ceremoniis, Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinorum*, p. 585. See earlier footnote.

<sup>381</sup> Whilst in general this may be correct, as J.B. Briney notes, the furniture of a synagogue may include a chest housing trumpets and other musical instruments used on festive occasions. See Briney, *Musical Instruments*, pp. 117-8.



Bradshaw, for example, was to write ‘we know much, much less about the liturgical practices of the first three centuries of Christianity than we once thought we did’.<sup>382</sup> The position taken in his 1965 dissertation was somewhat softened by 2000, when James McKinnon wrote, ‘to say that the early Christian pre-Eucharist synaxis is not a direct borrowing of an ancient synagogue liturgy is not to deny the obvious debt of Christian liturgy to Judaism in general and to the synagogue in particular’.<sup>383</sup> Indeed, by 1990, McKinnon had written ‘it is unlikely that there was already in place a formal service of the word that could be adopted *en bloc* by the first Christians’.<sup>384</sup>

Whilst the issue of Temple/synagogue influence is addressed below, it can be postulated that emulation of neither Temple nor synagogue services are necessarily to be regarded as providing the most defining elements of early Christian worship. As Margot Fassler and Peter Jeffery write in ‘Christian Liturgical Music from the Bible to the Renaissance’ ‘... the most distinctively Christian gatherings of the early church were not Christianized synagogue or Temple services but, rather, the common meals, related to the ritualised Jewish banquets celebrated by groups of disciples gathered around an authoritative Rabbi or teacher..’<sup>385</sup> In such situations, early Christian psalmody was located.<sup>386</sup>

On the common meal, F.E. Warren, writes ‘The love-feast, or agapé, was a common meal, at which the first Christians met together in token of love and brotherly kindness. It was partly of a religious, partly of a social, but not of a sacramental character’.<sup>387</sup> Many writers, including Warren, are of the opinion that in earliest Christian worship, such a meal preceded the Holy Eucharist, but that abuses crept in (possibility of the ‘wine, women [/men] and song’ variety to which human nature

<sup>382</sup> Paul F. Bradshaw, *The Search for the origins of Christian worship* (London, 2002), Preface, x.

<sup>383</sup> McKinnon, ‘Music’, *The Early Christian World II*, p. 783.

<sup>384</sup> James McKinnon, ‘Christian Antiquity’, in James McKinnon (ed.), *Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century* (Basingstoke, 1990), p. 69.

<sup>385</sup> Margot Fassler and Peter Jeffery, ‘Christian Liturgical Music from the Bible to the Renaissance’ in Lawrence A Hoffman and Janet R. Walton (eds.), *Sacred Sound and Social Change: Liturgical Music in Jewish and Christian Experience* (Notre Dame, 1992), p. 84. On research into the detection of hymns within the texts of the New Testament see J.T. Sanders, *The New Testament Christological Hymns* (Cambridge, 1971).

<sup>386</sup> Calvin R. Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World: Musical Thought in the Early Church* (Grand Rapids, 2007), p. 157.

<sup>387</sup> F.E. Warren, *Liturgy of the Ante-Nicene Church* (London, 1912 [1897]), p. 32.

frequently demonstrates its susceptibility),<sup>388</sup> the addressing of which included severance of the two events.<sup>389</sup>

Clearly, much diversity existed in the devotional practices of different Christian communities. Whilst recent scholarship increasingly brings this to our attention, in the early fifth century, Socrates (380-450 A.D.) states that ‘to give a complete catalogue of all the various customs and ceremonial observances in use throughout every city and country would be difficult – rather impossible’. He continues, ‘it is impossible to find anywhere, among all the sects, two churches which agree exactly in their ritual’.

<sup>390</sup> Andrew McGowan writes ‘recent research makes a case for greater diversity of practice ... it [the agapé] may have meant different things in different times and places’.<sup>391</sup> As Margaret Barker, writes, ‘it is no longer easy to see a direct line between the Last Supper and what the Eucharist came to be ... Was the Last Supper, perhaps, one of Jesus’ fellowship meals with his friends, special because it was on the evening before he died?’.<sup>392</sup>

Be that as it may, early Christian assembly, arguably including companionable eating in a worshipful setting, may not be incompatible with elements of musical accompaniment within that setting. As discussed elsewhere in this study, the use of the aulos (by translators usually termed ‘flute’<sup>393</sup>) at Christian gatherings was a not unknown preliminary, exciting ‘their hearers to the point of frenzy with the flute’, or to accompany dancing at the conclusion of worship – ‘I wish to play the aulos ... dance all of you’.<sup>394</sup> McKinnon writes in 2000, ‘the majority of references to

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<sup>388</sup> As R. Joseph Hoffmann writes on Tertullian’s description of the agapé (*Apology*, 39), it ‘does nothing to exclude the possibility of abuses ... [and] is obvious from the direction of his argument that outsiders were fond of pointing out inconsistencies in the Christian public attitude towards pagan “licentiousness” and their private indulgences in wine and song’. See R. Joseph Hoffman, Introduction to *Celsus on the True Doctrine: A Discourse Against the Christians* (Oxford, 1987), pp. 19-20. The *Epistle of Jude* 2: 12, speaks of men who ‘are hidden rocks in your love feasts, reveling shamelessly’. See Peter Russell Jones, *The Epistle of Jude* (Lampeter, 2001), p. 86.

<sup>389</sup> See Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:17-34. Some commentators consider that the ‘Lords Supper’ in I Corinthians 11:20 refers to the love-feast. See Warren, *Ante-Nicene*, p. 32.

<sup>390</sup> Socrates, *HE* 5: 22.

<sup>391</sup> Andrew McGowan, ‘Naming the feast: the agapé and the diversity of early Christian meals’ in *Studia Patristica* xxx (1997), p. 315.

<sup>392</sup> Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London, 2007), p. 23.

<sup>393</sup> On translation of musical instrument names, see earlier in this chapter.

<sup>394</sup> Acts of John 94-7, *MECL*, p. 25.

Christian song from the first three centuries are to singing at common meals, whether the meal be part of an agapé service (love feast) or some less formal occasion'.<sup>395</sup> He also writes 'one can well imagine, for instance, particularly in the earlier centuries when evening meals figured more prominently in Christian religious gatherings, that the discreet accompaniment of a lyre might have been fairly common in the hymnody that was heard in the houses of well-to-do Christians'.<sup>396</sup> Many historians and musicologists, writing in the past half century<sup>397</sup> have noted that in the quieter world of more domestic religiosity, the use of musical instruments, especially those less associated with pagan moral decadence, may well have been a familiar sound in the accompaniment of devotional singing. Clement of Alexandria writes, 'at a banquet we pledge each other while the music is playing, soothing by song the eagerness of our desires, and glorying God'.<sup>398</sup> But condemnation is directed at 'those who invite actors, dancers and lewd woman,<sup>399</sup> provoking the accusation that they 'invite demons and the devil and fill their house with numberless enemies'.<sup>400</sup> Addressing the pagans, the poet Commodian, contemporary of Constantine wrote, 'However often you may have eaten with flutists, if you have not adored the crucified Lord you have perished'.<sup>401 402</sup>

Donald Jay Grout, writing a few years before McKinnon's PhD dissertation,<sup>403</sup> in distinguishing between public and private worship, appears to argue that some

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<sup>395</sup> McKinnon, 'Music', p. 781.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 777.

<sup>397</sup> Examples are cited later in this chapter.

<sup>398</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, 6: 11, *ANF* 2, p. 500.

<sup>399</sup> Many of the Fathers describe female dancers and musicians as harlots. That many such female dancers and musicians were slaves or servants and treated as sexual objects, see J. Michele Edwards 'Women in music to c.a. 1450' in Karin Pendle (ed.), *Women and Music: a History* (Indiana, 1991), p. 26. On women as instruments of the devil, see Eliena Giannarelli 'Women and Satan in Christian Bibliography and Monastic Literature (iv-v centuries)' in *Studia Patristica* xxx (1997), pp. 196-7 and 201.

<sup>400</sup> John Chrysostom, exposition of Psalm 41 (42), quoted *MW*, p. 130.

<sup>401</sup> Commodian, *Instructiones* 1, 32, 7, quoted *MW*, p. 143.

<sup>402</sup> Whilst undoubtedly some occasions saw 'negligibly clad girls brought in a dinner parties to entertain the guests with music and dancing' (Henry Chadwick, *Boethius: The Consolations of Music, Logic, Theology, and Philosophy*, Oxford, 1981, p. 86), it should not be assumed that this was mandatory, or that banquets presided over by a non-Christian host were necessarily scenes of debauchery. E.g. see 'A Polite Party', in A.N. Sherwin-White, *Fifty Letters of Pliny* [Pliny the Younger, c.61-c.113] (Oxford, 2000 [1969]), p. 84 on after dinner music. On earlier intimation that 'where the drinkers are men of worth and culture you will find no girls piping or dancing or harping' (Plato, *Protagoras*), see Chester Starr, 'An evening with the flute-girls' in *La Parola del Passato* xxxiii (1978), p. 406.

<sup>403</sup> Donald Jay Grout, *A History of Western Music* (London, 1960), p. 31.

Fathers, at least, were accepting of the use of a lyre in the private worship of the home.<sup>404</sup> McKinnon, whilst arguing uncompromisingly for the absence of instrumental playing 'in church', would appear to concede (by 2000, but not mentioned in his 1965 or 1987 publications) the possibility of such activity outside the physical confines of a church building. In the main, this accords with Joseph Gélineau, who writes, 'In this connection we must distinguish on the one hand between private playing of instruments and the customs at social-religious gatherings at which acceptable instruments were used, and, on the other hand, liturgical worship properly so-called in which there was nothing of the kind'.<sup>405</sup> Quasten, however, goes a little further, writing 'Since the lyre and the cithara were tolerated at the agape in Clement's time, the supposition that they were used in the liturgy appears justified, for in his time the liturgy was still very closely bound up with the agape'.<sup>406</sup> No less strongly, Eric Werner writes that it would 'be a bold inference if we were to assume that there was no instrumental music in the liturgy of the Early Church'.<sup>407</sup> In 2010 Christopher Page asserted that it would be a mistake to interpret the range of earliest Christian music in the light of what the mainstream Church would eventually find acceptable, or to assume that ordinary Christians viewed the playing of musical instruments in worship 'in the same light as the Fathers who harangued them'.<sup>408</sup>

Meanwhile, in the far reaches and strong Churches of such distant lands as Ireland and Ethiopia (yet probably grown from the seeds of early Egyptian monasticism), a moral neutrality towards music and dance seemed to accept the normality of their place – in worship, as in life more generally – and to avoid conflict in the desires and aspirations of 'elite' and 'ordinary' Christians.

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<sup>404</sup> Philo (c.20 B.C.-c.50 A.D.) seems to regard the lyre in a favorable light – 'the lyre with seven strings is nearly the best of all instruments' – *Legum Allegoriae*, 1. v, from which Werner construes that Philo 'excepted the lyre from the accusation of sensuality', - 'Hellenism and Judaism', p. 431, and Quasten that 'the lyre remained comparatively unblemished by use in idol worship and was employed more frequently in private homes'. – *Pagan and Christian*, p. 73.

<sup>405</sup> Joseph Gélineau, *Voices and Instruments in Christian Worship* (London, 1964), p. 150.

<sup>406</sup> *MW*, p. 73.

<sup>407</sup> Werner, *Sacred Bridge*, p. 317.

<sup>408</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 32.

## Conclusion.

The aims of this chapter have been threefold: (a) to examine attitudes to theoretical and practical music (b) to identify musical resources available, and (c) to discuss the diversity of occasions and situations of Christian worship, during the period up to 680 A.D., when music (vocal and instrumental), and dance might be involved. It is maintained in this chapter and others, that a renunciatory asceticism, guiding forms of religious life – especially within the Roman empire – saw the rise of a spiritual elite whose writings indicate their perception of sensuality as being alien to spirituality, and allied to sin. This produced a condemnatory ‘wet blanket’ under which only the most rudimentary music and dance forms were regarded as legitimately expressed religiosity. This was, nonetheless, the start of a Christian monastic chant, the continued evolution of which reached its summit of achievement beyond the centuries examined here.

Occasions of Christian worship, even in the Roman world, were not, however, the sole domain of ecclesiastical authority. This is witnessed by texts and archaeological evidence concerning, for example, the sometimes disorderly masses who congregated at vigils. Such masses were conversant with the music of their day, many learned to sing, dance, and play. They wanted and needed to put these attributes to use in worship. Such ‘ordinary’ Christians seem to have been sufficiently resilient to the dictates of their betters as to preserve the role of music in their devotional life. This might be in the privacy of domestic worship, or more public occasions of lamentation or celebration. By the mid fifth century, Pagan traditions of music in state ceremonial seem not entirely discarded once such ceremonies (for example, coronations) became ‘religious and Christian’.<sup>409</sup>

That the ordinary Christian masses were not easily persuaded by the exhortations of those who instructed them, or that they would willingly lay aside all of the religious practices of their pagan heritage, is clear from the reactions of particularly notable figures of the Early Church. John Chrysostom, for example complains of being booed

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<sup>409</sup> Tsirpanlis, ‘Imperial Coronations’, p. 82 cited earlier.

and hissed at, and of having to raise the emotional pitch of his language in attempting to gain the approval of his congregation.<sup>410</sup> Of practices ‘carried over’, Augustine concedes that ‘these things are to be tolerated, not loved’.<sup>411</sup> Towards the theatre (the central focus of attack by the Fathers, and closely associated with the playing of musical instruments), Robert Markus writes ‘the thunder of Tertullian and Novatian seems to have fallen on deaf ears’.<sup>412</sup> Perhaps, as Gareth Sears writes, ‘Practice and popular belief clearly could overrule official dogma’.<sup>413</sup>

To whatever extent Sears’ comments correctly describe Christian worship within the Roman empire, beyond – certainly northwards to Ireland, southwards to Ethiopia, eastwards to parts of India and China – different attitudes, formulated by the nature and nurture of a different cultural environment, appear to have produced a more music and dance inclusive notion of Christian worship.

An example at the northern periphery of the Roman empire, in the year 680 A.D., with which the timeframe of this thesis ends, may be seen in Bede’s account of the musical vocation discovered by the monk Caedmon. In secular life Caedmon seemed not to like music – certainly not to sing or play the harp – or perhaps he was embarrassed by his lack of skill. Bede writes:

Indeed it sometimes happened at a feast that all the guests in turn would be invited to sing and entertain the company; then, when he saw the harp coming his way, he would get up from table and go home.<sup>414</sup>

Following one such departure, however, Caedmon had a dream in which he ‘began to sing verses in praise of God the Creator that he had never heard before’.<sup>415</sup> Recounting this to the abbess of the nearby monastery of Streanaeshalch (Whitby),

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<sup>410</sup> Robert L. Wilkin, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4<sup>th</sup> Century* (Berkley, 1983), pp 105 and 106, citing *De Sacerdotio* 5, 1, PG 48, 673.

<sup>411</sup> *Sermo* 104 (*Morin Guelf.* 29), quoted Robert Markus, *The End of Ancient Christianity* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 111.

<sup>412</sup> Markus, *The End*, p. 102.

<sup>413</sup> Gareth Sears, *Roman Africa* (Stroud, 2011), p. 138.

<sup>414</sup> Bede, *E.H.* 4: 24.

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, 4: 24.

she admitted him ‘into the community as a brother’,<sup>416</sup> where he seems to have sung on every imaginable sacred subject. Whether he learned to provide accompaniment on the harp we are not told.<sup>417</sup> But that harpists were in short supply, and equally that senior clerics thought harp music desirable, is clear enough from the slightly later (mid eighth century) correspondence between Cuthbert (Abbot of Wearmouth, not to be confused with St Cuthbert) and (fellow Englishman) Lul, bishop of Mainz, in which Cuthbert asks if Lul can provide him with a harpist, ‘for it would delight me also to have a harpist ... for I have a harp and am without a player. If it be not a trouble, send one also for my disposal’.<sup>418</sup>

Whilst not greatly significant, these incidents concerning the harp, reputedly recorded, further indicate that not all of the early Christian world was condemnatory in its attitude to instrumental music.

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<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 4. 24.

<sup>417</sup> This event, however, gave rise to the earliest known English drawing of a harp, in the tenth century Anglo-Saxon manuscript, *Caedmon's Metrical Paraphrase of Scripture History*, Bodleian Library, MS. Junius 11. See Roslyn Rensch, *The Harp: Its History, Technique and Repertoire* (London, 1969), p. 31.

<sup>418</sup> Letter from Cuthbert to Lul, given in *Oxford World Classics: The Anglo-Saxon World*, tr., introduction, and notes, Kevin Crossley-Holland (Oxford, 1982), p. 185. It can be argued as a reasonable deduction that the religious fervour of Cuthbert of Wearmouth would not direct the services of a harpist in totally secular performance. That a previous gift from Lul to Cuthbert – a ‘multi-coloured coverlet to protect my body from the cold’ – was, by Cuthbert, ‘given with great joy to Almighty God and the blessed Apostle Paul, to clothe the altar which is consecrated to God in his church’, is stated in the same correspondence.

## **Chapter four: The emotions/passions in the context of early Christian worship.**

1. Emotional religiosity: within and beyond the officially sanctioned pale. 2. Emotional activity in the context of music and dance. 3. Performance. 4. The audience. 5. Ecstatic union with God. 6. Conclusion.

### **1. Emotional religiosity: within and beyond the officially sanctioned pale.**

A reoccurring concept of this study is ‘difference’. On the one hand, the general population of Christians – the ‘ordinary’ people whose concepts of Christianity encompass a variety of motivations and a highly varied intensity of commitment. On the other, an ‘elite’, whose writings indicate a not infrequent disappointment concerning the relatively lukewarm observance by the masses, of directives placed before them. This was doubtless exacerbated once the popularising of Christianity, following its official sanction in the early fourth century, saw a diverse influx of new Christians. Some may have been sufficiently untutored, even unrestrained emotionally, as to bring about what John Corrigan describes as a ‘canopy of emotionology [that] no longer provides order and meaning’.<sup>1</sup> As discussed earlier (chapter two), this may be seen as feeding the fire of asceticism which swept through much of the Christian world in the fourth century. At best, the emotionally less restrained surge in Christian/Christianized worship, brought about situations where, to return to Corrigan, ‘Great divides sometimes open between seemingly official church endorsements of a certain kind of emotionality in religion and the religious experiences of the lay membership’.<sup>2</sup> Corrigan asserts, therefore, that ‘the study of emotion in religion has to be conducted simultaneously on two fronts ... officially sanctioned religious emotionality ... [and] rank-and-file experiences’.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Inherited philosophical background.*

Attitudes towards the emotions, whether examined in terms of ‘elite’ or ‘ordinary’ Christians, were rooted in earlier attitudes to the subject, where, in pursuit of virtue

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<sup>1</sup> John Corrigan, Introduction to John Corrigan (ed.), *Religion and Emotion: Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford, 2004), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.



and the avoidance of vice, the emotions were to be strictly controlled, or even totally suppressed – depending on the philosophical concepts adhered to. Under the influence of the Stoics, passions came to be identified with unrest – ‘with an undirected drive that destroys philosophical peace of mind’.<sup>4</sup> Resonances of Stoic thought can be heard in the words of Ambrose, for example: ‘Our flesh is disturbed by the various passions and is ever restless like the sea’.<sup>5</sup> Any concept of ‘officially sanctioned religious emotionality’ owes much to the philosophical attitudes concerning the ‘passions’ as expounded by the educated elite. Music, seen as a potent force in the stimulation and manipulation of the emotions, was a powerful tool in attempting to define, establish, and control states of emotion, including what might be argued, if somewhat tentatively, as ‘officially sanctioned’.

Any attempt to gain from their writings, an understanding of how the ancients perceived the emotions/passions, and how this clearly influenced ecclesiastical authority in the early Church(es), brings forcefully to our attention the immense power attributed to music in influencing/changing a person’s emotional state or mood. Plato writes, ‘more than anything else rhythm and harmony find their way to the innermost soul and take strong hold upon it’,<sup>6</sup> and categorises which modes<sup>7</sup> are acceptable and which ‘we must do away with’.<sup>8</sup> Clearly emotion would not be permitted an unrestrained freedom in such a republic as Plato’s.<sup>9</sup> In music, as in other

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<sup>4</sup> Erich Auerbach, tr. Ralph Manheim, *Literary Language and its Public in Later Latin Antiquity and in the Middle Ages* (London, 1965), p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> Ambrose, *De Noe et Arca* 15: 51, Auerbach, *Literary Language*, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 399a, tr. John Llewelyn Davies and David James Vaughan (London, 1977 [1886]), p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> The modes are discussed earlier in this study, and briefly, later in this chapter.

<sup>8</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 401d, tr. Davies and Vaughan, pp. 90-91.

<sup>9</sup> The question begged in Plato’s *Laws* and *Republic* centres around the means of identifying and distinguishing between melodies which influence the character for its moral good and those conducive to its moral ill. If reference to poorly structured melody and unsuitable rhythm do not sufficiently equip us for such judgement, we presumably do not ‘possess moral wisdom of all kinds’ (*Laws* 659a) giving immunity to emotional seduction, which enables qualitative moral judgements to be made. As John Caldwell comments, ‘Plato and Aristotle lacked the technical equipment and the motivation to evolve a more sophisticated theory of musical criticism ...[recognising] intuitive reaction [Aristotle, *Politics* 1342] but not attempting to explain or justify it’. As Caldwell continues, ‘It cannot be said that later writers [e.g. Aristoxenus] were any more successful in doing this. They retained the Platonic recognition of the power of music as a force for good or evil; but they were less concerned to codify the styles that produced either quality’. See John Caldwell, ‘Musical Judgement in Late Antiquity’, Charles Burnett (ed.), *The Second Sense: Studies in Hearing and Musical Judgement from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1991), p. 162.

artistic and literary work, the objective is simplicity as opposed to complexity, and having in mind that ‘poetry feeds and waters the passions instead of drying them up’,<sup>10</sup> is above all required to avoid any inclination towards immorality. Plato thus asserts that ‘Hymns to the gods and praises of famous men are the only poetry which ought to be admitted into our State’.<sup>11</sup> As Richard Lewis Nettleship summarises, ‘the encouragement given to unworthy emotions by hearing or reading emotional poetry’ or when, under the influence of a tragedy or comedy in the theatre ‘a man allows himself to enter into emotions which he would be ashamed to give way to in real life’ is condemned as ‘letting loose the emotional element in us, while keeping in abeyance reason, which should restrain appetite’.<sup>12</sup>

A half century later, Aristotle’s views concerning the emotional effects of poetry and theatre-going were somewhat different from those of Plato. Aristotle writes of theatrical drama:

arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions ... with rhythm and harmony or song superadded ... I mean that some portions are worked out in verse only, and others in turn with song.<sup>13</sup>

Whilst detailed discussion is beyond the competence of this study, reference cannot be omitted to Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which counters Plato’s contention that the theatre audience is stimulated to become captive to indiscriminate and uncontrolled emotional reactions. Aristotle maintains something rather different – that experiencing enacted drama actually stimulates the audience to be less controlled by emotion in that it provides an outlet, an emotional release, whereby, as F.L. Lucas comments, ‘the human soul is purged of its excessive passions’.<sup>14</sup> Early in the time-span of concern to this study, Aristides Quintilianus expressed a similar concept:

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<sup>10</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 607, tr. Davies and Vaughan, p. 339.

<sup>11</sup> Plato, *Republic*, 607, tr. Davies and Vaughan, p/ 339.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Lewis Nettleship, *Lectures on the Republic of Plato* (London, 1963), pp. 350 and 351.

<sup>13</sup> Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b, tr. S.H. Butcher (London, 1997 [1895]), p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> F.C. Lucas, *Tragedy in Relation to Aristotle’s Poetics* (New York, 1953), p. 24.

of that kind: they serve to cleanse away, with their songs and dances and games, the frenetic excitedness to which foolish folk have become subject through their way of life, or merely through chance.<sup>15</sup> Hence to say, there is a degree of reason behind Bacchic rites and others

Such purgation or catharsis in relation to what may or may not be considered ‘real’ emotion, is briefly discussed below

On the power of music, and the character of the various modes, Aristotle leaves us in no doubt:

...it is clear that we are affected in a certain manner ... [by many] kinds of music and not least by the melodies of Olympus for these admittedly make our souls enthusiastic<sup>[16]</sup>, and enthusiasm is an affection of the character of the soul ... in a more mournful and restrained state, for instance the harmony called Mixolydian[;] ... in a midway state ... the Dorian alone of harmonies seems to act[;] ... the same holds good about the rhythms, for some have a more stable and others a more emotional character ...<sup>17 18</sup>

Whilst given the appropriate context, surfacing of emotion can be reasonable and even beneficial in Aristotelian thinking,<sup>19</sup> for the Stoics *all* emotions are bad; they are

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<sup>15</sup> Aristides Quintilianus, *De Musica*, 3: 25, tr. Thomas J. Mathiesen (Yale, 1983), p. 200.

That the concept of catharsis has been a significant factor in Freud’s approach to psychoanalysis, Breuer’s use of hypnosis, or recent attitudes towards ‘anger management’ invites discussion which, if only through lack of space, is deemed beyond the remit of this study

<sup>16</sup> Melodies in the Phrygian mode (as discussed earlier) were believed to have the power to enthuse.

<sup>17</sup> Aristotle, *Politics*, 8: 1340a, tr. John Warrington (London, 1960), p. 227.

<sup>18</sup> Around five hundred years later, working in Egypt during the second century A.D., Ptolemy (amongst a succession of others) made similar distinctions between the modes, the higher *tonoi* having the: ‘capacity to excite ... the lower ones towards a greater capacity to calm. Hence it is reasonable to compare the intermediate *tonoi*, those around the Dorian, with moderate and table ways of life ... Our souls are quite plainly affected in sympathy with the actual activities of a melody’.

Ptolemy, *Harmonics* III. 7. 20, Barker *Greek Musical Writing: II*, p. 379.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel M. Gross, *The Secret History of Emotion from Aristotle’s Rhetoric to Modern Brain Science* (Chicago, 2006), p.3.

‘passions’ – affective states which can overwhelm and disrupt human rationality.<sup>20 21</sup> An example of Stoic response to emotions may be seen in the experience of grief<sup>22</sup> as expressed in lamentation, the practices of which may be heavily loaded emotionally. Stoic comment is not lacking, Marcus Aurelius advising, ‘mourn not with them that sorrow’.<sup>23</sup> The musical consequences of any emotional inactivity can be deduced from Seneca, who writes, ‘you show me which are the modes for lament: rather show me how I shall not utter sounds of lament among misfortunes’.<sup>24</sup> Seneca condemns activities ‘which do not remove any emotion or drive off any desire’;<sup>25</sup> indeed ‘emotions are reprehensible disturbances of the mind, sudden and excitable’.<sup>26</sup> The guidance of Marcus Aurelius follows much the same lines – ‘wipe out imagination: check impulse: quench desire: keep the governing self in its own control’.<sup>27</sup> In the latter regard, Aristotle may be thought to play a little into Stoic hands when conceding, in discussion of anger, that ‘each man is predisposed, by the *emotion now*

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An example used by many writers is the subject of anger. This emotion, according to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* may be seen as ‘conspicuous revenge for a conspicuous slight directed without justification towards what concerns oneself or towards what concerns one’s friends’ (*Rhetoric* 2. 2 1378b). It should be noted, however, that any outpouring of anger, for Aristotle, is not set in a twentieth century context of human rights, but within an antique concept of social status, where, as Daniel M. Gross writes:

Some are perfectly entitled to belittle others and can expect no anger  
in return, while others, such as the slave, are entitled to none of the pride  
that would make them susceptible to anger. In other words, anger, according  
to Aristotle, is directed at those who have no right to belittle ... “inferiors  
have no right to belittle (*Rhetoric* 1379b).

An early Christian approach subjects anger to some confinement (e.g. Ephesians 4. 25 ‘let not the sun go down...’) and in evolving Christian spirituality, anger was not to be indulged, Agathon, for example allegedly saying, ‘A man who is angry, even if he were to raise the dead, is not acceptable to God’. See Benedicta Ward (tr.), *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (New York, 1975), p. 23.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Gill, ‘The emotions in Greco-Roman philosophy’, Susanna Morton Braund and Christopher Gill (eds.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> For the philosophers of antiquity, as for later generations examining human behaviour, the extent to which the arts convey ‘real’ emotions begs a variety of questions, some of which are discussed later in this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> But it should be remembered that the contrasting qualities of music render it not only a powerful medium for the expression of grief, but equally capable of lifting grief-stricken emotion. Cicero, perhaps a trifle flippantly, poses the question, ‘If you see any of your relatives tormented by grief ... will you encourage them to listen to the sound of the water organ rather than of Plato?’ *Tusculans* 3. 43, cited Andrew Erskine, ‘Cicero and the expression of grief’, Susanna Morton Braund and Christopher Gill (eds.), *The Passions in Roman Thought and Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 45.

<sup>23</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 7: 43, tr. A.S.L. Farquharson (London, 2011), p. 108.

<sup>24</sup> Seneca, *Selected Letters* 88: 9 tr. Elaine Fantham (Oxford, 2010), p. 170.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 65: 15, p. 102.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 75: 12, p. 121

<sup>27</sup> Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* 9: 7, p. 140.

*controlling him ...*<sup>28</sup> First century Roman Stoic, Arius Didymus, writes of how the four basic emotions (or the ‘canonical four generic passions’ – appetite, fear, pain, pleasure) contradict the rational character of the human being, for ‘every passion is overpowering ... those in the grips of passion ... as if by some disobedient horse ... are led by their passions to being governed by their tyranny’.<sup>29</sup> It would not be correct, however, to assume music to be redundant in Stoic thought. As Quasten brings to our attention:

The Stoa also recognized the employment of music in the service of divination. According to Stoic teaching, ascesis and listening to music were preparations for the ecstasy, which along with purity of heart and a relationship with God, was considered to be the most favourable condition for prophesying.<sup>30</sup>

The subject of ecstasy is discussed later in this chapter.

Different religious/philosophical systems in other continents confronted the characteristics of human behaviour, and evolved behavioural frameworks within which life in accordance with their philosophical/religious concepts could be lived. In India, for example, the attitude of early Jainism towards the emotions demonstrates a certain commonality with the Stoics. The Jains categorise twenty-five types of passions or quasi-passions which must be conquered in the interest of the purity of the soul.<sup>31</sup> But this seems not to have mitigated against the use of vocal and instrumental music and dance as integral to religious devotion. As Jyoti Prasad Jain writes, ‘for the majority of the ordinary lay men, women and children ... it is through these things that they satisfy their religious hunger, gratify their sentiments and give vent to their religious zeal’.<sup>32</sup> Indeed Jain cites (albeit without dating) an adage of the Jains, ‘Art is the direct means to attain and become one with the Divine’.<sup>33</sup> A parallel can be seen to exist here, between ‘the majority of the ordinary lay’ Jains, and the masses subscribing to other belief systems – including Christians. Be all this as it may, from a

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<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 2:2, 1379a.

<sup>29</sup> Arius Didymus, as preserved in Stobaeus *Four Books of Extracts, Sayings and Precepts*, 2. 88. 8, Edgar M. Krentz ‘Early Roman Empire Stoics’, John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (London, 2008), p. 125.

<sup>30</sup> Quasten, *MW*, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> The passions being four classes each of anger, pride, deceit and greed. The nine quasi-passions laughter, sorrow, like, dislike, fear, disgust, and sexual passion as found in males, females, and neuters. See Jyoti Prasad Jain, *Religion and Culture of the Jains* (Delhi, 1975), pp 68-9.

<sup>32</sup> Jain, *Religion and Culture*, p. 124.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

purely Stoic standpoint, linkage may be discerned between any disapproval of emotion, and restriction of the means (for example music and dance) by which emotion might be stimulated. Absorption of Stoic thought into early Christianity, inevitably resulted in any tolerance of music being both regulated and wary. Athanasius, whilst generally positive about the effect which music can have on the soul, nonetheless rejects the pleasurable enjoyment of musical sound:

Some of the simple ones among us, even while believing the texts  
to be divinely inspired, still think that the Psalms are sung melodiously  
for the sake of good sound and the pleasure of the ear. This is no so.<sup>34</sup>

*Continuous perceptions.*

Whilst the immense importance of music, derived from its place amongst the Liberal Arts, has been discussed elsewhere in this study as a backdrop to understanding the possible link between the importance of theoretical music in cosmic terms, and the soul-penetrating power of practical music in relation to the emotions. Cassiodorus tells us:

The heavens and the earth, indeed all things in them which are directed  
by a higher power, share in this discipline of music, for Pythagoras attests  
that this universe was founded by and can be governed by music... If we  
live virtuously, we are constantly proved to be under its discipline.<sup>35</sup>

The attainment of virtue, through the power of music, may be argued as a literally 'practical' manifestation whereby the highest concepts of 'theoretical' music underpin the sung/played music which reaches the ears. As Boethius reminds us, 'of the four mathematical disciplines ... music is related not only to speculation but to morality as well.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Athanasius, 'A Letter to Marcellinus' 27, Robert C. Gregg (tr.), *Athanasius: The Life of Anthony and The Letter to Marcellinus* (New Jersey, 1980), p. 123.

<sup>35</sup> Cassiodorus, *The Institutions*, tr. Hames W. Halporn (Liverpool, 2004), p. 88.

<sup>36</sup> Boethius, *De institutione musica* I, tr. Calvin Martin Bower (PhD dissertation, Peabody, 1967), p. 32.

Belief that proclivity towards virtue or vice could be emotionally stimulated, and the effectiveness of music as a stimulant, is not restricted to the period of prime concern to this study. It should be seen in the context of some continuity. Familiar examples include the melodic strains of Apollo's lyre or David's harp.<sup>37</sup> According to Iamblichus, music could turn emotions around 'in the direction of moral excellence',<sup>38</sup> to which end Pythagoras is alleged to have composed specific melodies – to be played on a stringed instrument, as pipes have an adverse effect on emotion (!).<sup>39</sup> That the good effects of music could be put to use in training the passions of the young, was posited by second century B.C. philosopher, Diogenes of Seleucia (Babylon).<sup>40</sup>

The idea that the passions were vices,<sup>41</sup> or at the very least, that the passions of the soul may be likened to unruly children,<sup>42</sup> would seem to be echoed by Christian writers, including Clement of Alexandria, who directed that the soul to be kept quiet and not be stirred by external impressions that stimulate the passions.<sup>43</sup> The emotions/passions, especially the passionate emotions such as Galen (129–200 A.D.) lists as 'temper, anger, fear, grief, envy and extreme desire',<sup>44</sup> if unrestrained, as Galen's contemporary, Clement expresses it – 'unbridled and disobedient to reason'<sup>45</sup> – could be morally disastrous. To the extent that music was considered highly influential in establishing or changing the emotional state, it was clearly a force to be reckoned with – for good or ill – and perhaps perceived as weighted towards the ill. Justification was provided by the variety of reprehensible circumstances in which music was frequently located. An example of such association is provided by Prudentius, who, writing of 'the attractions offered by a shameless whore with

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<sup>37</sup> On the subject of musical instruments see chapter three, pp. 137-153.

<sup>38</sup> Iamblichus, *On the Pythagorean Life*, 64, tr. Gillian Clark (Liverpool, 1989), p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> Iamblichus *Pythagorean Life*, tr. Clark, p. 49

<sup>40</sup> Diogenes of Seleucia, *On Music*, D.L. Blane, 'Diogenes of Seleucia', D.J. Zeyl (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Classical Philosophy* (Westport, 1997), p. 193.

<sup>41</sup> The Stoics designated the four generic passions (appetite, fear, distress, pleasure) as the sources of all vice. See David Winston, 'Philo of Alexandria on the Rational and Irrational Emotions', John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (Abingdon, 2008), pp.201-2.

<sup>42</sup> Pseudonymous first century A.D. *Tabula Cebes*, Michael White, 'Moral Pathology: Passions, Progress, and Protreptic in Clement of Alexandria', John T. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Passions and Moral Progress in Greco-Roman Thought* (Abingdon, 2008), p. 296.

<sup>43</sup> White, 'Moral Pathology', p. 296.

<sup>44</sup> Galen, *On the Passions of the Soul* 3:1, White, 'Moral Pathology', p 294.

<sup>45</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 2: 13, *ANF* 2, p. 361.

perfumed hair' frames the question 'Was it for the idle melodies produced by a lyre-playing girl, for the sound of strings, the indecent party songs which inflame desire, that God gave us ears[?].'<sup>46</sup> The many allusions to music as a facilitator of moral decadence notwithstanding, that its moral versatility could prompt lofty statements which continued throughout musical history, clearly indicate that the subject should be seen in a much broader context, and not as unique to the period explored in this study. To briefly illustrate this, we might cite Handel's friend and contemporary Johann Mattheson, who, in *Der vollkommene Capellmeister*, 1739, writes of the composer's moral duty:

To represent virtue and evil with his music and to arouse in the listener love for the former and hatred for the latter. For it is the true purpose of music to be above all else a moral lesson.<sup>47 48</sup>

#### *Desert monasticism.*

One might hope for something a little more gentle from music, than 'a moral lesson'. Something more spiritual perhaps, such as Maria Jaoudi hints at when writing in a way that the early Fathers might not totally disapprove – 'the rhythms of chant calm us, open us, and bring us into that sacred space where awe meets the divine'.<sup>49</sup> Chant, especially of the Psalms, was clearly understood as offering a corrective to disturbances of the soul wrought by the passions. As Evagrius writes, 'Psalmody lays the passions to rest',<sup>50</sup> and Athanasius:-

... from the Psalms he who wants to do so can learn the emotions and dispositions of the soul, finding in them also the therapy and correction suited for each emotion.

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<sup>46</sup> Prudentius, *Hamartigenia*, Caroline White, *Early Christian Latin Poets* (London, 2000), p. 81.

<sup>47</sup> Hans Lenneberg 'Johann Mattheson on Affect and Rhetoric in Music', *Journal of Music Theory* 2 (1958), p. 51.

<sup>48</sup> An example of more recent writing which is not out of kilter with such sentiments, may be seen in Patrik N. Juslin's comment, 'music has a characteristic frequency distribution of emotions that is skewed towards positive emotions ... characterized by attitudes of detachment, restraint, self-reflexivity, and savouring'. Patrik N. Juslin, 'Music and Emotion: Seven questions and seven answers', Irene Deliege and Jane W. Davidson (eds.), *Music and the Mind: Essays in honour of John Sloboda* (Oxford, 2011), p. 127.

<sup>49</sup> Maria Jaoudi, *Christian Mysticism East and West* (New York, 1975), p. 128.

<sup>50</sup> Evagrius, *De oratione* 83, *MECL*, p. 59.



For thus beautifully singing praises, he brings rhythm to his soul ... and gaining its composure by the singing of the phrases, it becomes forgetful of the passions...<sup>51</sup>

Chant and its possible calming effects might not inappropriately link to some brief mention of the desert hermits in the context of the emotions/passions (and pre-emotions, or ‘first movements’ of emotion<sup>52</sup>). Perhaps the most innovative Christian figure here, is Evagrius of Pontus (c.345–99 A.D.), who asserted that ‘It is a great thing to pray without distraction, but to chant Psalms without distraction is even greater’.<sup>53</sup> Wrestling in the desert with emotions later to be categorised by others as the seven deadly sins, he devised strategies whereby the desert monk could play one emotion off against another, until, with the aid of prayer, the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*, freedom from emotion, could be achieved:

All the generic types of thoughts fall into eight categories in which every sort of thought is included. First is that of gluttony, then fornication, third avarice, fourth sadness, fifth anger, sixth acedia, seventh vainglory, eighth pride. It is not up to us whether any of these disturb the soul or not linger or not, or whether they stir up emotions or not.<sup>54</sup>

#### *Diversity of attitude.*

It is not implied that early Christianity subscribed to the beliefs of any one school of philosophical attitudes – even those adopted by Evagrius, who was anathematised in 553 A.D. *Apatheia* came to be regarded as compatible with (arguably the strongest of all emotions) the love of God, and although more consistent with Aristotelian than Stoic thinking, pity (which Evagrius claimed could ‘arrest seething anger’<sup>55</sup>) also came to be reconciled with the concept of *apatheia*. Views that we must not react *without* emotion or feeling were propounded in official documents, and in the writings

<sup>51</sup> Athanasius, ‘A Letter to Marcellinus’ 13 and 29, tr. Robert C. Gregg, *Athanasius: The Life of Anthony and The Letter to Marcellinus* (New Jersey, 1980), pp. 112 and 126 respectively.

<sup>52</sup> Briefly discussed later in this chapter, pp. 179–80.

<sup>53</sup> Evagrius, *The Monk: A Treatise on the Practical Life*, tr. Robert E. Sinkewicz, *Evagrius of Pontus: The Greek Ascetic Corpus* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 97–8.

<sup>54</sup> Evagrius, *The Monk*, tr. Sinkewicz, p. 97.

<sup>55</sup> McKinnon, *MECL*, p. 58.

of many of the Fathers. The mid third century *Didascalia* advocates that those at the Paschal Vigil ‘be watching the whole night ... in fear and trembling and with diligent weeping’.<sup>56</sup> Basil of Caesarea writes of how ‘the people betake themselves at night to the house of prayer. With contrition, sorrow, and many tears they make confession to God’.<sup>57</sup> Gregory of Nyssa concedes that there are times when our burdens can be lightened only by tears<sup>58</sup> and like Nemesisius (late fourth century) bishop of Emesa, maintains the position that *apatheia* may be an appropriate ideal for some people.<sup>59</sup>

Augustine writes ‘Among the philosophers there are two opinions about these mental emotions ... [which some call] perturbations, some affections, and some, to render the Greek word more accurately, passions’.<sup>60</sup> Augustine maintains, in outlining Aristotelian and Stoic concepts, that with regards to the question of ‘whether the wise man is subject to mental passions, or wholly free from them, the controversy is one of words rather than of things’.<sup>61</sup> The issue, which if only for reasons of space must be considered beyond the scope of this study, relates to the categorisation or not, of pre-emotions or first movements of emotion, when ‘alarming and formidable objects ... move the soul even of the wise man ... but this does not imply that the mind accepts these evil impressions’<sup>62</sup> as truly emotions.<sup>63</sup>

Augustine, in some opposition to *apatheia*, clearly sees a legitimate role for the passions:

I am not aware that any right thinking person would find fault with anger  
at a wrongdoer which seeks his amendment, or with sadness  
which intends relief to the suffering, or with fear lest one in danger

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<sup>56</sup> *Didascalia*, MW, p. 173.

<sup>57</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Epistle 207*: 3, MW, p. 173.

<sup>58</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *On Pulcheria* 46, Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, p. 392.

<sup>59</sup> Nemesisius, *Nature of Man* 19, Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, p. 392.

<sup>60</sup> Augustine, *City of God* 9: 4 tr. Marcus Dods (New York, 1999 [1950]), p. 282.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 9: 4, p. 282.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 9: 4, p. 283.

<sup>63</sup> Brief mention of this is made elsewhere in this study – the issue being that of categorising any experienced initial glint of emotionality before consent to the experience is either given or withheld.

be destroyed.<sup>64</sup>

Also in *City of God*, Augustine cites Paul's directive (Rom. 12: 15) that we should rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep. As discussed earlier in this study, Augustine was clearly (by self-admission) gripped by music he heard, and perplexed as to how to handle his own emotional response to it, writing, 'Thus I vacillate between the peril of pleasure and the value of the experience'.<sup>65</sup> Augustine, however, as a member of the 'elite' is clearly quite negative where exponents of practical music are lacking in theoretical knowledge. Those who 'sing well under the guidance of a certain sense, that is, do it harmoniously and sweetly' are disparaged, as should they be questioned about 'numbers or intervals of high and low notes' they could not reply. Augustine's disparagement goes further, posing the question, 'aren't those who like to listen to them without this science [the liberal discipline of music] to be compared to beasts? For we see elephants, bears, and many other kinds of beasts are moved by singing'. He concedes, however, that 'great men, even if they know nothing about music' may 'do this very properly' when 'in order to relax the mind they very moderately partake of some pleasure'.<sup>66</sup>

## **2. Emotional activity in the context of music and dance.**

What remains to be discussed in the balance of this final chapter, is the extent to which, in the context of emotions/passions, for either side of the 'great divides' referred to by John Corrigan (cited at the beginning of this chapter), 'between seemingly official church endorsements of a certain kind of emotionality in religion' and the 'religious experiences of the lay membership', music and dance contributed to the formation and expression of early Christian religiosity.

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<sup>64</sup> Augustine, *City of God* 9: 5 tr. Dods, p. 285.

<sup>65</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* 10: 33., *MECL*, p. 155, *PL* XXXII, 799.

<sup>66</sup> Augustine, *On Music* 4: 5, tr. Taliaferro, p. 177.

*'Staged' emotionality.*

The negativity frequently displayed by the Fathers towards the theatre, in full flow by the fourth/fifth centuries, is hinted at as early as the close of the second century in the comments of Tatian, who, clearly antipathetic to the whole concept of 'acting' or musical entertainment was 'disgusted [that an actor] was one man on the inside and on the outside pretended [acted] to be what he was not'. Tatian's negativity extended into the use of music, for he adds, 'nor do I wish to gape at many singers'.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, despite condemnation of the theatre by Church leaders, even in a Roman empire strongly influenced by its new religion, it was not unknown for actors to be paid from the public purse or funded by wealthy benefactors seeking the support of the local populace.<sup>68</sup> Limited acceptance by ecclesiastical authority (rather than tolerance) of the theatre was further stretched through the legally coerced expectation that the children of actors, like the children of other service providers, would follow their parents profession;<sup>69</sup> though this was an obstacle to baptism.<sup>70</sup> As Ruth Webb writes, 'The twists and turns of this legislation highlights the tension between a Christian ideal, voiced by bishops, and the realities of running a Christian empire in which the people expected their entertainment'.<sup>71</sup>

There are clearly parallels between the drama enacted at the theatre and the ritualistic drama of religious worship<sup>72</sup> – whether the latter is enacted as official liturgical ceremony, or at gatherings such as might arise at a commemoration of the dead. The presence of emotion may be 'felt' at the time, recollected from a specific memory of

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<sup>67</sup> Tatian, *Discourse to the Greeks* 22, ANF 2, p. 75.

<sup>68</sup> Webb, *Demons and Dancers*, p. 46.

<sup>69</sup> In Rome, for example, the density – if it may be so expressed – of performers must have seemed an overwhelming presence to any mid fourth century expansion of Christian community. By 353 A.D., in an estimated 300,000 maximum population of the city, there were around 3,000 female dancers (one percent of the population!), probably a greater number of male dancers, innumerable choruses and musicians, including many guilds of 'flute-girls'. See Richard C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and its Audience* (London, 1991), pp. 135 and 152.

<sup>70</sup> Lim, 'Converting the Un-Christianizable', K. Mills (ed.), *Conversion in Late Antiquity* (Rochester NY, 2003), cited Webb, *Demons and Dancers*, p. 46.

<sup>71</sup> Webb, *Demons and Dancers*, p. 55.

<sup>72</sup> Earlier history clearly demonstrates this, e.g. the mysteries of Egyptian mythology were portrayed through symbolic dance dramas; every Greek theatre housed an altar of Dionysus; the main festivals of Dionysus included dramatic performance. See Fritz Graf, 'Religion and drama', Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 55-71. Periods beyond the remit of this study were to see a continuing development of Christian 'liturgical drama', the beginnings of which are referred to in chapter three of this study.

previously felt emotion, or theatrically ‘faked’<sup>73</sup> by drawing on a more general memory bank of emotion. The parallel is not confined to the ‘actors’ – whether these are performing a play with music and dance at the theatre, or performing a religious ritual in a place designated for the purpose. The parallel extends to those who have assembled with the intention of intellectual and emotional engagement, to witness and to share the performance – which may be seen as ‘simultaneously a real event, taking place at the moment of its enactment, and also a timeless replication of itself’.<sup>74</sup> Of course, this begs questions concerning how ‘real’<sup>75</sup> enacted emotion may be, which have proved equally controversial for antique philosophers as for modern psychologists.

In *Confessions* 3: 2, conceding that ‘drama enthralled me’, Augustine discusses how different is pity in the theatre from pity in real life.<sup>76</sup> This may prompt questions concerning such feelings as ‘contrition’, ‘compassion’, or other emotions experienced during the drama of liturgically enacted worship, contrasted with those spontaneously encountered in ‘real life’ – or indeed how any emotion triggered in church, for example by an awe inspiring homily, relates to life beyond the church door. Amongst contributions to this controversial subject, in *On Anger* 3: 2, 306 Seneca tells us that arts do not arouse real emotions in the audience, only initial ‘first movements’<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> It is argued here that whilst in performances depending on recollection of past inspiration, the process of recollection may revive an approximation of earlier inspiration, such revival is not available ‘on demand’. Employment of memory to reproduce on uninspired occasions, the nuances and interpretive subtleties of earlier inspired performance, becomes, in such circumstances, the best remaining option. This applies not only to music, but to other forms of ‘performance’. To this extent the emotional content of acting may be described as ‘faking’, which, when combined with the obvious fact that the character portrayed by the actor has an identity different from the actor’s own, appears to have disconcerted Tatian (cited above)

<sup>74</sup> Beacham, *Roman Theatre*, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> The issue being that of ‘real’ emotion experienced by performer(s) and/or audience, as distinct from the convincing reality of a theatrical production, e.g. as Mario Erasmo, commenting on the ‘staged’ rather than natural context of *cantica* in Roman theatre, asks ‘who, after all, sings their joys and fears?’, Mario Erasmo, *Roman Tragedy: Theatre to Theatricality* (Austin, 2004), p. 14.

<sup>76</sup> Theatrical performance, Augustine contends, when portraying what, if suffered personally ‘is commonly called misery’, can trigger in the bystander audience, a sense of compassion – ‘when we feel for others it is called mercy’. The hearer, however, ‘is not stirred to help ... only to grieve’. Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. E.M. Blaiklock (London, 1983), 3: 2, pp. 59-60.

<sup>77</sup> It might be noted in passing, that Augustine writes. ‘Hence my love of sorrows [was] not those which would bite too deeply (I had no desire to suffer what I watched), but which, heard and imagined, I might scratch upon the skin’. *Confessions*, 3: 2.

whereas Aristotle, as we have seen, took quite a different position in his theory of emotional catharsis.<sup>78</sup>

But beyond that which may be described as ‘therapeutic’ – or pushing that concept to its extreme – it might be argued that another human desire, perhaps irresistibly rooted deep in the human psyche, is evident within the context of emotional stimulation when intensely increased emotional activity may stimulate experiences perceived as ecstatic encounter with God. The power of music as such a stimulant is discussed below.

### **3. Performance.**

#### *The performer.*

For both the musician and dancer, whether of antiquity or more recent times, the complexities of emotion relating to themselves and those within their sphere of emotional influence – the spectators/audience/congregation, – presents certain challenges within the context of ‘performance’. As referred to elsewhere in this study, a frequent performer cannot depend on that somewhat elusive quality of emotion – ‘inspiration’ – to guide the performance. In the context of music, a clumsy attempted description of inspiration, might include reference to an intuitive state, guiding subtlety in the performer’s touch, and filtered by such aesthetic good taste as is developed by early training and later experience. That the performers of antiquity were well aware of such inspiration is clear from the question Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates ‘[in performances where] you produce the greatest effect upon the audience ... are you not carried out of yourself, is your soul not transported[?]’,<sup>79</sup> and the reply, ‘I recite a tale of pity, my eyes are filled with tears ... of horror or dismay,

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<sup>78</sup>Such areas as the consideration of the therapeutic value of theatrical performance, and the therapeutic value of (performing) acts of religious devotion, as well as issues concerning sincerity in relation to real, recollected, and simulated emotions are discussed below.

<sup>79</sup> Plato, *Ion* 535a, tr. Trevor J. Saunders, *Early Socratic Dialogues* (London, 1987), p. 56.

my hair stands up on end and my heart throbs'.<sup>80</sup> In performances where such inspiration is lacking, the performer must recall not so much how previously experienced 'inspiration' felt, but what nuances were wrought under its influence, which from memory, can be reproduced at will. Keeping such recollections 'in the act' is, it may be supposed, conducive to the conveyance of a chain of emotion commencing with what the author or composer once felt, which performers wish to re-enact,<sup>81</sup> and an audience wish to share. It could of course be argued that the first of that chain – the author/composer – is also dependant on inspiration. As Plato expresses it, 'the poets are only the interpreters of the Gods by whom they are severally possessed'.<sup>82</sup>

Such inspiration may be commonly construed as 'bringing the performance to life' by introducing subtleties of interpretation to the 'work'. When applied to music, in much later centuries, the elements of musical composition – the notes, rhythms, harmonies, dynamics – could be transmitted in written form, leaving the performer to provide a nuanced and possibly inspired interpretation of the written material. The intentions of the composer are clearly identified through a modern notational system from which the performer either reads at the performance, or has committed to memory through frequent repetition. Whatever the role of inspiration – felt, recollected, or faked – in modern performance, it can be argued that in antique performance, where notational systems (probably unlearned by most performers, whose repertoire was acquired by emulation of others) expressed a different, less scripted set of directions to performers, 'inspiration' was even more an essential of performance. Any extent to which such antique performances, were more 'extempore' than we are accustomed to today (with the exception of jazz), suggests their being more dependant on inspiration, and perhaps better practised both in any structural disciplines involved,<sup>83</sup> and more open to such inspiration,

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 535f, p. 57.

<sup>81</sup> During the period of concern to this study, composer/author and performer might well be one and the same.

<sup>82</sup> Plato, *Ion* 534e, tr. Saunders, p. 55.

<sup>83</sup> It may be mentioned in passing, that extemporized performance – whether by cathedral organist, or jazz band – frequently adheres, albeit somewhat loosely, to a preconceived structure.

As a generalisation, the description of the emotional objectives of dancers given by Lucian, may be applied to other forms of performance – ‘the dancer undertakes to present and enact characters and emotions, introducing now a lover, and now an angry person, one man afflicted with madness, another with grief.’<sup>84</sup> That excessive zeal was at times employed is also recorded by Lucian, noting that when, in a performance depicting the madness of Ajax, the actor became so overwrought in the role that he snatched the *tibia* from Odysseus and broke it over his head.<sup>85</sup> But such uncontrolled behaviour was not necessary for audiences to be emotionally manipulated by the power of the stage. As Ovid writes, ‘zithers, flutes and lyres weaken the resolve, and voices, and arms swaying in rhythm’.<sup>86</sup> Convincing performance was doubtless encouraged by Roman law, which allowed, should any public official in the audience be displeased, for the performer to be publicly whipped!<sup>87</sup> Whether the subtleties of inspired<sup>88</sup> artistic interpretation were enhanced by such a prospect may not be without its uncertainties.

The effectiveness of performance was not, of course limited to events staged in the theatre. Christian assemblies, with hymns and homilies, could also be occasions of persuasive ‘performance’, and acclaimed or disclaimed as deemed appropriate by commentators. Harmonius, son of Bardesanes (154-222 A.D.), is said, by his ‘heretical’ hymns, to have ‘beguiled his audience and led to their destruction’.<sup>89</sup> Maris, in the late 370s A.D., at festivals of the martyrs, ‘charmed the people with his

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<sup>84</sup> Lucian, *De Saltatione* tr. A.M. Harmon, Beach, *Roman Theatre*, p. 143.

<sup>85</sup> Beacham, *Roman Theatre*, p. 143.

<sup>86</sup> Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 751, tr. J. Lewis May, *The Love Books of Ovid* (New York, 1940), p. 207.

<sup>87</sup> Beacham, *Roman Theatre*, p. 145.

<sup>88</sup> In passing, the possibility may be voiced (though its complexity places discussion beyond the remit of this study) that the ‘gift’ of inspiration shares some commonality with the ‘gift’ of grace. Such a concept might resonate with the comments of Richard D. Martin, writing of Ancient Greek rites, which, he states:

pivot on the notion that a performance filled with charm, offering the best combinations of song, music and dance, attracts divine favour all the more.  
  
Religious acts from the singing of hymns to the dedication of statues can be thought of as containing ‘grace’ or *charis*, which is then echoed in the gods’

reaction to them. (Richard D. Martin, ‘Ancient theatre and performance culture’, Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 46.

<sup>89</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus, *Ecclesiastical History* 4: 26, *NPNF* (2nd series), 3, PG LXXXII, 1189.



pleasant voice'.<sup>90</sup> That the possibility of triggering 'real', as distinct from simulated emotion was influenced by the style of performance would seem to be intimated by Nicetas of Remesiana, who insists that psalm singing should 'not proclaim theatrical distress ... but rather create compunction in the listeners'.<sup>91</sup> The content, as well as the style of performance attracted the criticism of Jerome, when 'theatrical melodies and songs are heard in the church'.<sup>92</sup> But diversity between churches is apparent from the statement of Augustine, that 'the Donatists reproach us because in church we sing the divine songs of the prophets in a sober manner, while they inflame their revelry as if by trumpet calls for the singing of psalms composed by human ingenuity'.<sup>93</sup>

That any officially sanctioned expression of emotion in worship was likely to be endangered should the sound of musical instruments be added to that of voices is clear from the objections raised. Relating to music 'in church', where, for example, something of a burning issue is implied by canon seventy-four of the Council of Laodicea, insisting that any reader/cantor even learning to play the cithara and persisting with it, 'must be discharged and excluded from the church'.<sup>94</sup> In the context of grave-side commemoration of the martyrs, as referred to earlier, Augustine asks 'Did not the establishment of these vigils in the name of Christ bring it about that citharas be banished from this place'.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Theodoret of Cyrus, *Historia religiosa* 20 [earlier work] *MECL*, p. 106, *PG* LXXXII, 1429.

<sup>91</sup> Niceta of Remesiana, *De utilitate hymnorum* 13, *MECL*, p. 138.

<sup>92</sup> Jerome, *Commentarium in epistulam ad Ephesios* 3: 5: 19, *MECL*, p. 144.

<sup>93</sup> Augustine, Epistle 55: 34, *MECL*, pp. 163-4, *PL* XXXIII, 221.

<sup>94</sup> Council of Laodicea, c. 74, *MECL* p. 120.

<sup>95</sup> Augustine, *In psalmum* 32: 2., *MECL*, p. 156, *PL* XXXVI, 179. On the place referred to possibly being the burial site of Cyprian, see chapter one of this study, p. 44.

#### 4. The audience.

Leaving aside situations where public presence is achieved through coercion by secular or religious authority,<sup>96</sup> that people choose to gather together at ‘public events’ of various kinds may be indicative of human needs not limited to the intellectual. In our own time the ‘pop’ concert, last night of the Proms, football final, Olympic event, etc., whilst beamed internationally to the domestic screen, excites fierce competition for tickets to personally attend – to be part of the event and in a direct way to ‘be there’ and share with performers and co-spectators, the emotion of the occasion. The public buildings of antiquity, in their profusion<sup>97</sup> and capacity,<sup>98</sup> provide evidence not only of the popularity<sup>99</sup> of public occasions, but indicate the role of public buildings in housing the events essential to maintaining civic harmony and identity.<sup>100</sup> Of activities within such buildings, having briefly discussed emotion, its stimulation and communication from the standpoint of the ‘performer’, some discussion from the ‘audience/congregation’ perspective may not be inappropriate – impacting as it does, on the use and suppression of music and dance in early Christian worship.

To whatever extent the performer(s), through music, dance, acting, or well delivered rhetoric seek to delight, entertain, or persuade – the audience, by their presence, indicate an openness to being delighted, persuaded, taught, etc. by means certainly not

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<sup>96</sup> For example, authoritarian political systems which enforce displays of public affirmation, or of spiritual governance demanding attendance at religious ceremonies under penalty of excommunication, and threat of eternal consequences. This may be seen, for example, in the early fourth century council of Elvira (discussed elsewhere in this study in relation to music and dance), primarily convened to strengthen morality and discipline, which devotes several canons to absenteeism from church, and imposes severe penalties of excommunication. For a comprehensive, albeit ‘dated’ discussion of Elvira, see William Winterslow Dale, *The synod of Elvira and Christian life in the fourth century: a historical essay* (London, 1882).

<sup>97</sup> For example, Vitruvius, writing of limited life-span (but non-the-less carefully designed) wooden theatres, in his treatise on architecture, comments on the ‘many theatres built every year at Rome’. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 5: 5:7, tr. Richard Schofield (London, 2009), pp. 136-7.

<sup>98</sup> An example may be seen in the main theatre at Ephesus, as enlarged by Trajanus in the early second century A.D. which had a capacity of twenty-five thousand spectators, whilst even the much smaller *Odeon* could seat fifteen hundred. See Naci Keskin, *Ephesus* (Istanbul, 2012), pp. 28-9 and 53. The Colosseum in Rome, could accommodate fifty thousand spectators.

<sup>99</sup> For Example, Fronto, writing in the mid-second century, states that ‘through the shows the entire population [of Rome] is kept in good spirits’, Beacham, *Roman Theatre*, p. 189, citing M. Cornelius Fronto, in the edition of M.P.J. van den Hout (Leiden, 1954), p. 200.

<sup>100</sup> It might be noted in passing, that power struggles between competing groups of Christians often centred on possession of the church buildings necessary for large scale communal acts of worship. See Wilken, *Chrysostom and the Jews*, p. 12.

devoid of emotional content. Whatever the millennium, one does not go to a play, concert, or act of religious worship to sit in cultivated emotional resistance, stubbornly unmoved by what is seen and heard. For the congregation at a religious ceremony complete with homily, whilst the degree and type of emotion ‘officially sanctioned’<sup>101</sup> may be a moot point, a willingness to be moved by the preaching, if not by the hymns may be argued as evidenced in the writings of the Fathers.<sup>102</sup> Indeed it may be argued that so important is deliberate engagement of the emotions, that like other powerful forces in human life (for example desire for food, sex, communication – none of which is itself devoid of emotional content<sup>103</sup>) it is essential to the prospering of human existence. Paradoxically therefore – lest the power of emotion become overpowering – emotional engagement may be treated with severe caution by ecclesiastical authority.<sup>104</sup> It may be regarded as a proper subject for the constraints of ascetic life in the ‘cutting away of our many carnal passions’,<sup>105 106</sup> and (as discussed earlier in this chapter) be disparaged by philosophical systems seeing such passions/emotions as detrimental to self control,<sup>107</sup> should a soul, through an initial act

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<sup>101</sup> Certainly a strong emotionalism underpins earliest Christian worship, and may be deemed ‘officially sanctioned’ by such Fathers as Tertullian, who writes of ‘offering up prayer to God as with united force we may wrestle with him in our supplications: this violence God delights in’. Tertullian, *Apology* 39, Hoffmann, *Celsus*, p. 19.

<sup>102</sup> Relevant comments of Augustine, for example, on being moved by hymns, are cited elsewhere in this study and clearly the powerful homilies delivered by Chrysostom and others cited in this study, intend to inform and persuade listeners by both engaging the intellect and swaying the emotions.

<sup>103</sup> Without wishing to digress beyond the remit of this study, such powerful forces are the subject of ‘behaviourist’ psychologists whose ‘conditioning theory’ is expressed by John Rowan – ‘it is only the strong conscience built up through conditioning, through good socialization or taming, which can cope with these strong forces, which have the whole power of evolution behind them’, John Rowan, *Ordinary Ecstasy: Humanistic Psychology in Action* (London, 1976), p. 175.

<sup>104</sup> Caution – even suppression of heightened emotion – is certainly evident in reaction to religious dancing, especially when taking place ‘in church’. Such dancing in church is known to us mostly through the recorded objections of ecclesiastical authority. Basil reproved dancing in the chapels of Caesarea, Ambrose voiced objection in Milan, and in (what is now) southern France, Caesarius of Arles complains that ‘the custom of dancing is still with us from pagan ritual. See Caesarius Arelat, *Sermo* 13.4; Basil, *Homily* 14 *In ebriosos* 1; Ambrose, *Epistle* 58.6 – all cited Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire A.D. 100 – 400* (Yale, 1984), p. 150.

<sup>105</sup> Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 1.7 tr. Barbara J. Bruce (Washington, 2002), p. 36.

<sup>106</sup> ‘For a monk temptation is a thought rising through the emotional part of the soul’ – Evagrius, *Practical Treatise*, 74, Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, p. 360. Evagrius and the evolution of ‘first movements’ to ‘deadly sins’ is discussed earlier in this chapter, alongside less stringent views concerning moderation rather than eradication of the emotions.

<sup>107</sup> Modern psychology would be likely to concur to the extent of describing unbridled emotion as ‘regressive and infantile’ and that ‘a barbarian culture is mostly ... ruled by instincts and emotions’ – though wary of ‘repress[ing] instincts and emotions in self-justified discipline and asceticism’, seeking rather to engage with ‘instincts [and] feelings, in order that by working through them ... the whole of life is lived in balance’. See Kenneth L. Becker, *Unlikely Companions: C.G. Jung on the Spiritual*

of consent, ‘entirely transform itself from reason and intelligence into emotion and agitation’.<sup>108</sup> The conflict that arose, should the compelling desire for emotional engagement find expression in music and dance in the context of (potentially, at least) the most powerful of human emotions – love and worship of God – is central to this chapter, and indeed to this study as a whole.

That audiences developed sensitivity towards the emotional projections of performers is frequently referred to, amongst others, by Cicero. This could be ‘worked’<sup>109</sup> by performers – indeed to further his power of persuasion, Cicero took elocution lessons from his friend and actor Clodius Aesopus. Any heightened audience sensitivity was of course used to advantage by performers – for example politicians bent on influencing the masses,<sup>110</sup> and, once Christian leaders began to address large swayable congregations, the extending and deepening of conversion could be brought about by the orator’s skill.<sup>111</sup> As Chrysostom makes clear, ‘the power of eloquence ... is more desired in a church than when professors of rhetoric are made to contend against each other’.<sup>112</sup> Christians, like their pagan friends and neighbours relished public entertainment. Whether their ‘footfall’ took the direction of the place of entertainment, or the place of worship (a problematic distinction, at times), emotional engagement was an essential ingredient of the occasion. Having this in mind, it may be argued as unsurprising that music and dance should not be confined to entertainment, but surface in religious devotion, and, where such devotion is Christian, that the Fathers would seek to direct, regulate, and, where believed necessary, attempt to restrict its role. Unsurprising too, that Christian worship beyond the church door (for example in cemeteries and martyrs’ shrines, as discussed earlier) proved less controllable by ecclesiastical authority, and that despite the many

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*Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* (Leominster, 2001), pp 73 and 287, citing Jung’s lectures on the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius.

<sup>108</sup> Giulia Sissa, *Sex and Sensuality in the Ancient World* (Yale, 2008), p. 84.

<sup>109</sup> To use a current theatrical term to describe the manipulation of audience emotion by the performer(s).

<sup>110</sup> Beacham, *Roman Theatre*, p. 156.

<sup>111</sup> Analysis of homilies from the perspective of emotions initiated is regarded as beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>112</sup> Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio* 5: 1 cited Wilken, *Chrysostom and the Jews*, p. 105. For example Ambrose on the value of hymns, and the frustration of Chrysostom when members of his congregation absented themselves from church in favour of popular entertainment, are discussed in chapter three of this study.

complaints of the Fathers, such locations were quite literally a ‘stamping ground’<sup>113</sup> for the music and dance of popular Christian culture.

*Real and recollected audience emotion.*

The role of recollected emotion to re-enact the ‘inspired’ nuances of previous performance, briefly discussed above, does not imply that recollection is a uniquely ‘performer’ process. For audiences too, recollected emotion – oftentimes nostalgic – is undoubtedly a strong element in the attraction of many public occasions. Whether in commemoration of the dead in the cemeteries of late antiquity, celebrating the anniversary of some historic event, or present day cenotaph remembrance of lives taken in war, therapeutic value – indeed fulfilment of a human need to revisit previously occupied emotional territory<sup>114</sup> – may be argued as convincingly evidenced in such gatherings. It might be kept in mind that from the very first, Christian communal meals were ‘in remembrance’ of Jesus – ‘This is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me’.<sup>115 116</sup>

Just as recollection as an essential aid to performance may offer the possibility of old emotion being rekindled, or, failing that, the opportunity to re-enact remembered ‘inspired’ nuances of interpretation, so, not totally dissimilar possibilities may occur for responsive witness-participants of a performance/public event.<sup>117</sup> It may be argued that the emotional state of a member of the audience is influenced not only by the performer(s), but by the emotional state of the audience/congregation as a body, arising from a form of bonding which can resemble that which may exist between co-

<sup>113</sup> See later in this chapter and chapter three, p. 154, on ‘stamping dances’.

<sup>114</sup> To hover at the boundaries of this study’s remit, to the extent that our past is integral to who we are (evidenced, should for example, the tragedy of Alzheimer’s occur), recollection is essential to our self-identification, and central to our future evolution/formation – i.e. how we respond to our recalled emotional past impacts on our future. It may be noted in passing, that therapy aiding sufferers from Alzheimer’s frequently employs music as a means of accessing memory.

<sup>115</sup> Luke 14:19.

<sup>116</sup> Liturgically this is expressed, for example, in the *Divine Liturgy of John Chrysostom* in the anamnesis ‘Remembering, therefore, this command of the Saviour and all that came to pass for our sake ...’, *The Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom*, ‘The Holy Anaphora’, [www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/liturgy/liturgy.html](http://www.ocf.org/OrthodoxPage/liturgy/liturgy.html) accessed 18.1.13.

<sup>117</sup> The principal difference lies in that whilst both performer and audience commit (by their presence) to emotional engagement, only the performer is tasked with promoting it; initiating the interaction of emotion and recollection – ‘kick-starting’ it, if necessary – being a function of the actor, musician, preacher etc.

performers. That for those involved as audience/congregation, the occasion (encompassing both performers and spectators<sup>118</sup>) may trigger ‘real’ emotion, instigate recollection of previously experienced emotion, or produce symptomatic ‘first movement’ of emotion (as discussed above) is clearly the subject of ageless discussion and controversy.

Despite the profusion of words expended on the subject of emotion, ‘there is no consensus on the topic among philosophers and psychologists’.<sup>119</sup> Certainly there seems not to exist a definitive explanative description of the emotions and how they are influenced by encountered experience. Carroll C. Pratt maintains that ‘the notion that music can embody or contain an emotion is psychological nonsense. Emotions can only be located in the individual who has them.’<sup>120</sup> That music does not ‘embody or contain’ emotion seems reasonable enough. When Sextus Empiricus wrote that ‘one melody produces movements in the soul that are dignified and charming, another produces movements more base and ignoble’<sup>121</sup> his contention is not that music embodies or contains those emotions, but that a melody can initiate emotion (‘movements of the soul’) in the listener – that music is the embodiment of emotional triggers.<sup>122</sup> Something not totally dissimilar is expressed in Iris Murdoch’s comment that ‘certain aspects of natural beauty occasion [trigger] feelings of sublimity in us’.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> That within the somewhat formal constraints of theatre, concert, or religious ritual the behaviour of the audience/congregation is not without elements of ‘acting’, whilst briefly touched on in this chapter, is, to any developed extent, regarded as beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>119</sup> Charles M. Shelton, ‘Graced Gratitude’, *The Way*, July 2003, p. 139.

<sup>120</sup> Carroll C. Pratt, *Music as the Language of Emotion* (Washington, 1952), p. 6. For a different viewpoint, including the possibility ‘that emotions are “in” the music’ see Peter Kivy, *Sound Sentiment: An Essay on the Musical Emotions* (Philadelphia, 1989), especially pp 58-9.

<sup>121</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Musicians*, tr. Denise Davidson Greaves (Nebraska, 1986), p. 165.

<sup>122</sup> Hindemith, however, in *A Composer’s World* maintains that audience reaction to music is a ‘mental reaction’ not involving the emotions, on the ground that ‘if these mental reactions were feelings, they could not change as rapidly as they do’. This argument is rebutted by Deryck Cooke (*The Language of Music*, Oxford, 1959) on the basis that it cannot be assumed that such reactions come abruptly to a close once the passages of music which stimulate them are over.

Opposition to ‘real’ emotion being triggered by music, on the grounds that ‘real’ emotions could not change – ‘keep up with’ – the frequently changing moods depicted in some musical scores, seems to be based on the notion that within the individual listener (or group of listeners) only one emotion at a time can be active. This may be argued as over simplistic if in fact, at different levels, several emotions are running simultaneously, and the triggering determines not the sole emotion experienced, but that which predominates when brought (however momentarily) to the surface.

<sup>123</sup> Iris Murdoch, *Existentialists and Mystics* (New York, 1998 [papers of the 1950s]), p. 208.

Carroll Pratt argues that only in a minority of listeners to music is ‘real’ emotion triggered. She writes of this minority to whom the ‘arousal of real emotion does indeed apply ...[that] they have a genuine emotional bath in a flood of sound’.<sup>124</sup> Whilst emotion triggered at public events may plunge that minority<sup>125</sup> into an emotional ‘deep end’, the more widely encountered ‘recollected’ response engenders relatively ‘safe’ emotional situations<sup>126</sup> which, though capable of influencing the subject’s disposition,<sup>127</sup> are not totally of the ‘here and now’. It is ‘action that has been isolated in space and time [<sup>128</sup>] from daily life’.<sup>129</sup> As Jerrold Levinson writes, ‘emotional responses to music typically *have no life-implications* [his italics]... bracketed from and unfettered by the demands and involvements of the corresponding emotion in life’.<sup>130 131</sup> Further support for emotionally basking in shallower waters may be found in artistic composition, where some highly charged emotional event in the life of the author is unlikely to trigger a work of art until ‘shock’ gives way to ‘reflection’ – for example, most love poems or ‘passionate’ musical compositions have been written some time after, not during the affected period of the writer/composer’s life. In much the same way, a particular location of intense emotional experience, may not be beneficially revisited until sufficient time has passed to allow some emotional wound to heal. As Ovid warned the lovelorn, do not ‘indulge in theatres until love has quite deserted your empty heart’.<sup>132</sup> Balanced

<sup>124</sup> Pratt, *Music as the Language*, pp. 7 and 8.

<sup>125</sup> It may be noted in passing, that for some, heightened emotional experience may be achieved by isolation from external influence – e.g. eremitical isolation, where reducing the possibility of external emotional stimuli may increase the power of stimuli should intermittent occasions of communal activity (such as singing hymns/psalms) take place.

<sup>126</sup> A further example of relatively ‘safe’ emotional engagement is to be found in Jung’s concept of religious symbols as a means of ‘dealing with divine reality without risking direct experience of its depth and power’. Becker, *Unlikely Companions*, p. 217, commenting on Jung *Collected Works*, 9. 21 and 11. 75.

<sup>127</sup> Questions are begged regarding whether music, as an emotional stimulant (discussed later in this chapter) influences the ‘will’, or – as a form of intoxication – to some extent suspends the ‘will’. It may be more appropriate/accurate to consider music’s emotion-changing power to influence the ‘disposition’ (‘mood’) of the subject – ‘deliberation’ as integral to acts of the ‘will’ being impaired or subject to a degree of impotence through emotional stimulation.

<sup>128</sup> The concept of segregated space, away from the ‘here and now’ influencing architecture in the design of areas for specific activities – theatre, stadium, church – beyond purely practical considerations, is briefly discussed in chapter three of this study.

<sup>129</sup> Fritz Graf, ‘Religion and drama’, Marianne McDonald (ed.), *Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge 2007), p. 58.

<sup>130</sup> Levinson, ‘Music and Negative Emotion’, p. 338.

<sup>131</sup> It is in no way suggested by the above discussion that the importance and value of recollected emotion is nullified by being distinguished from more acute ‘real’ emotion.

<sup>132</sup> Ovid, *Remedia Amoris*, tr. May, p. 207.

emotional life would seem to require a combination of responses including the ‘real’ emotion felt ‘now’, the ‘recollected’, which may trigger a return of similar though perhaps less acute emotion, as well as situations where memory of emotion does not, in any ‘felt’ way, rekindle it. Such would seem to be Augustine’s awareness when he writes:

My memory contains also the emotions of my mind, not in the same manner as the mind does at the time of the experience, but far differently, as the strength of memory is. When I am not happy, I remember that I have been happy, as I remember past sadness when I am not sad.<sup>133</sup>

Yet on another occasion, arguably experiencing spontaneous emotion, Augustine describes his reaction to the singing in Milan, when ‘a feeling of piety surged up and my tears ran down’.<sup>134</sup>

It is such active emotion, expressed through, or triggered by the music and dance of Christian worship, which has produced heated debate<sup>135</sup> throughout the centuries.<sup>136</sup> The early Church is no exception.

### *Collective emotion.*

Whilst public occasions may influence emotional changes in the individual spectator, powerful stimuli (e.g. moving liturgical celebration, gripping theatrical presentation, highly persuasive oration) may induce a situation in which the mass emotional

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<sup>133</sup> Augustine, *Confessions*, tr. Blaiklock, 10: 14

<sup>134</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* IX, 6 McKinnon, *MECL*, p. 154, *PL* XXXII, 769.

<sup>135</sup> Augustine’s internal debate caused him to ‘become an enigma unto myself’ (*Confessions* X. 33, *MECL* p. 154) which is briefly discussed in chapter three of this study.

<sup>136</sup> Any condemnation of the early Christian masses and their ‘popular piety’ by elite Fathers of the church was no more virulent than that of later writers in their assessment of ‘ordinary’ early Christians. Even as recently as the 1950s Hippolyte Delehaye, in describing the ‘generality of human minds’ writes ‘its intellectual level is that of as child ... it turns instinctively to whatever is glittering and attractive to the senses ... among people at large, the senses govern the understanding ... the emotions which beset the people at large, [are] intense, unrestrained emotions ...’ Hippolyte Delhaye, *The Legends of the Saints* (Dublin, 1998 [1955]), pp. 28, 33, and 36.



response<sup>137</sup> of the spectators as a body commands dominance over the individual in ‘the thrill of emotion which passes through a sympathetic assembly’.<sup>138</sup> The emotional religious fervour of (for example) sixth-century Christian Constantinople can be gleaned from Paul the Silentiary’s observation that the masses in the great basilica would ‘strive to touch the sacred [Gospel] book with their lips and hands, [as] the countless waves of the surging people break around’.<sup>139</sup> In such circumstances, as Peter Brown comments, the preacher, the bishop, even the Eucharist were ‘exposed to the full participation of the Christian populace’.<sup>140</sup> That collective emotional experiences were an expectation of the masses is suggested by Wilkin, writing, ‘Christians expected a performance in church equal to what they enjoyed in the theatre.’<sup>141</sup> If dissatisfied, they booed and hissed: if delighted they clapped hands and shouted’.<sup>142</sup> Gregory of Nyssa depicts a somewhat boisterous scene during the funeral rites of his sister, Macrina, ‘when the hymnic vigil in her honour was completed after the manner of the martyrs celebrations,’<sup>143</sup> the crowd of men and women who had come together from the entire region, broke in on the psalmody with their loud wailing’.<sup>144</sup>

Brief mention might be made here of what Peter Brown describes as ‘possibly the most highly rated activity of the early Christian church’ – the practice of exorcism.<sup>145</sup> Like other expressions of intense religious activity, exorcisms not infrequently took place at the shrines of martyrs. That the dramatic, possibly traumatic, emotional experience of possession and the subsequent exorcism were something to be deliberately sought after by the masses is argued by Chad Kile,<sup>146</sup> echoing the words of Brown, ‘the evidence from sixth-century Gaul suggests that not all the possessed

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<sup>137</sup> Not totally unrelated, that certain types of event, e.g. ritual, create feelings of *communitas* see Graf, ‘Religion and drama’, p. 59.

<sup>138</sup> Dale, *Elvira*, p. 285.

<sup>139</sup> Paul the Silentiary, cited Peter Brown, *Society and the Holy in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 1982), p. 201.

<sup>140</sup> Brown, *Society and the Holy*, p. 201.

<sup>141</sup> Or for that matter, in court, where speeches were frequently scripted by professional rhetoricians, to be ‘performed’ by the litigant. See Richard P. Martin, ‘Ancient theatre and performance culture’, in Marianne McDonald (ed.) *Greek and Roman Theatre* (Cambridge, 2007), p. 48.

<sup>142</sup> Wilkin, *Chrysostom and the Jews*, p. 105.

<sup>143</sup> The meaning of which is discussed in chapter one, p. 43, of this study.

<sup>144</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Macrina* 33, *MECL*, pp. 73-4.

<sup>145</sup> Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago, 1981), p. 108.

<sup>146</sup> Chad Kile, ‘Feeling Persuaded’, p. 237.

came to the shrines already in a state of extreme disturbance', indicating a deliberate self-subjection to the drama of seeking possession and exorcism,<sup>147</sup> possibly through music and dancing, to a point of emotional and physical exhaustion.<sup>148</sup> Such scenes could present a level of raw emotion found deplorable by those whose educated restraint produced a different expression of Christian worship. In the rambunctious energy of popular devotion, alien concepts could be seen – perhaps uncomfortably close to pagan practices – which begged condemnation. The emergence of various magic orientated heretical sects (for example Simonians and Menandrians), would only intensify any confusion in the devotional life of many early Christians.

Christian exorcisms were no doubt performed in the presence of a body of spectators and witnesses.<sup>149</sup> Whilst there is little evidence from which to construct a picture of music and dance used in the performance of Christian exorcism, it would seem clear from Sulpicius Severus that possessed Christians in the fourth century were 'whirled'<sup>150</sup> in the exorcisms of Martin of Tours;<sup>151</sup> though whether or not such whirling dances were accompanied by musical instruments remains unknown. But to whatever extent 'the relations of music to possession are of the same order, give or take a few variations, whatever the possession cult'<sup>152</sup> the probability exists that music and dance, so closely identified with exorcism in the practices of other religions<sup>153</sup> was not necessarily absent from Christian exorcism. Backman maintains 'that from the earliest days of the Church' exorcism was performed with dancing to the accompaniment of castanets, and that the continuation of these 'stamping dances' is evidenced in a marble relief of the 1430s located in Florence Cathedral.<sup>154</sup> Gilbert

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<sup>147</sup> Brown, *Cult of the Saints*, p. 111.

<sup>148</sup> For example, 'whirling' in the context of exorcism by Martin of Tours is referred to below.

<sup>149</sup> For example, Cyril of Jerusalem writes of requesting 'the assembly of virgins' (at exorcisms of catechumens) to desist from chattering, 'and married women should do likewise'. Cyril of Jerusalem, *Procatechesis* 14, *MECL*, p. 75, *PG XXXIII*, 356 (Exorcism was a standard feature in preparation for baptism.)

<sup>150</sup> 'Whirling' is associated with exorcism in a variety of religious belief systems. See later in this chapter, and W.O.E. Oesterley, *Sacred Dance in the Ancient World* (Cambridge, 1923), pp. 128-39.

<sup>151</sup> Sulpicius Severus writes that Martin of Tours exorcized 'Gallic Rustics' by causing them to 'whirl themselves about ... and permitted them to depart when he thought good'. Sulpicius Severus, *Life of St Martin*, ch. 12, *NPNF*, 2<sup>nd</sup> series, 11. For comment see MacMullen, *Christianity and Paganism*, p. 95.

<sup>152</sup> Rouget, *Music and Trance*, pp. 153-4.

<sup>153</sup> For example as described by Monique Brandily in 'Musical Exorcism among the Kotoko', T. Nikiprowetsky (ed.), *La musique dans la vie* (Paris, 1967).

<sup>154</sup> Backman, *Religious Dance*, p. 47 – including illustration of the relief.

Rouget makes the case for stringed instruments (rather than wind or percussion) being used in Jewish exorcism.<sup>155</sup>

Pushing the body to some form of physical and emotional exhaustion through music and dance – as for example, when done by ‘Whirling Dervishes’ – is likely to induce, or at least increase the possibility of ecstatic experience. Whether rituals of worship involve stillness or movement, music/dance can be important to the process – be this through the tranquillity achievable through semi-chanted psalms, the devotional vigour of grave-side dance, or the ‘whirling’ dances of early Christians and others, who found in bodily sensual means, often pushed to extremes, a perceived emotional gateway to experiences perceived as divine.

## 5. Ecstatic union with God.

As the areas visited in this chapter would indicate, discussion of the emotions/passions is essentially a discussion of contrasts. Not only are the emotions a manifestation of contrasting moods, feelings and disposition, but as briefly examined earlier in this chapter, reaction to the clearly observable power of the emotions/passions displays contrast (for example between Stoics and Aristotelians) regarding how the passions should be treated.<sup>156</sup> Contrast is clearly discernable between the sometimes highly emotional religiosity displayed in the worship of the masses and the tranquillity of calmly chanted psalms. Whilst what Maria Jaoudi refers to as ‘a vibratory calm’<sup>157</sup> may resonate with concepts of emotion associated with ‘passive’ ecstasy (a term discussed below), a contrasting demonstrable physicality pervades scenes where ecstasy is more actively pursued. Whether knowable only internally, or expressible by a variety of external means – for example music and dance – it may be postulated that ecstasy, either in its attainment or in the practices of attempting that attainment, can represent a pinnacle of emotional engagement

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<sup>155</sup> Rought, *Music and Trance*, pp. 154-7.

<sup>156</sup> In terms of ‘emotional triggers’ discussed earlier, which triggers should be embraced and which shunned.

<sup>157</sup> Jaoudi, *Mysticism*, p. 26.

commensurate with any concept of ecstatic union with God.<sup>158</sup> It is in this context that the subject of ecstasy will be discussed below.

During and beyond the centuries and geographical locations reviewed in this study, and likewise within and beyond the confines of the specifically Christian, the ecstatic experiences of a spiritually high-flying elite have frequently been recorded. If the difficulties of describing ‘ecstasy’ be thought to benefit from dictionary definition, the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* (tenth edition), offers the following – ‘**Ecstasy** – an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state. Greek – *ekstasis* – “standing outside oneself”’. Such a description of ecstasy is in accord with Philo’s ‘stand outside of yourself ... be inspired with frenzy’,<sup>159</sup> and may be thought to resonate with the words of Augustine ‘where to such a degree occurred a withdrawal of the attention from the senses ... as is wont to happen in a more vehement ecstasy’.<sup>160</sup> Andrew Louth, citing Philo, brings to our attention the contrasting levels of emotional intensity – from ‘stillness of mind’ to ‘divine possession or frenzy’ – which can be associated with experiences of ecstasy.<sup>161</sup>

#### *‘Passivity’ and ‘activity’.*

Any association of music and ‘passive’ ecstasy is remote – limited to remarks on the presence of heavenly background music during passive ecstatic experience. Such brief comment as is given below is made in the interest of distinguishing between

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<sup>158</sup> This is not of course limited to Christian concepts. As June McDaniel writes of ecstatic religion in Bengal ‘...full of intense passion and desire for direct experience, the saint ... whose life

follows his experiences of religious ecstasy ... is subject to intense emotional states and visions of God’, *The Madness of the Saints: Ecstatic Religion in Bengal* (Chicago, 1989), p. 1.

Philo writes in a not dissimilar way, of ‘a trance which proceeds from inspiration, takes violent hold

of us, and madness seizes us ... this very frequently happens to the race of prophets;

for the mind that is in us is removed from its place at the arrival of the divine Spirit’. Philo, ‘Who is heir of divine things’, *WPC*, 52, p. 299.

<sup>159</sup> Philo, *Who is the Heir of Divine Things* 64, *WPC*, p. 281.

<sup>160</sup> Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 12: 31: 59, tr. John Hammond Taylor (New York, 1982), vol. 2, p. 222.

<sup>161</sup> Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford, 1981), p. 33 citing Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres sit*, 249.

‘passivity’ and ‘activity’ in the context of ecstasy. Any extent to which a commonality exists, between ecstatic experience passively received, and that actively sought, may render a brief consideration of the former not wholly irrelevant to the latter – amongst whose stimulants, music and dance occupy positions of some importance.

For the recipient of gratuitous ecstasy, ‘passivity’ would seem to be the keyword. Beyond consensual engagement with the concept of passivity, any ensuing ecstatic experience is seen as wholly the act of God. As Cuthbert Butler writes, ‘the soul lying passive in the hands of God, receiving the gift and not resisting the divine action’.<sup>162</sup> It is, as Louth describes, ‘not attained, or discovered: it *comes upon* the soul’.<sup>163</sup> Whilst definition of ecstasy has prompted philosophical and psychological debate, the difficulty of describing the experience of ecstasy tends to cluster illustrative material around the writings of those claiming personal ecstatic encounters. Analysis of spiritual experience, as Timothy Luke Johnson states, ‘necessarily depends on some sort of report from the one experiencing’.<sup>164</sup> That those who have known ecstatic experience have a duty to impart what they can of it to others, is, within the time span of this study, demanded by Gregory I (pontificate 590-604 A.D.), who writes, ‘Whoever benefits by beholding spiritual things must by telling of them deliver them to others’.<sup>165</sup> Earlier Christian texts would of course include Paul, and the author of Revelation, John.

It may be assumed that ecstasy was not an unknown experience to Plotinus, who writes, ‘Many times it has happened: Lifted out of the body into myself ... beholding a marvellous beauty ... acquiring identity with the divine’.<sup>166</sup> The phenomena of ecstasy would seem familiar to Augustine when he writes of ‘a state midway between sleep and death’ where ‘whatever bodies may be present are not seen with the open eyes, nor any voices heard at all’.<sup>167</sup> Ecstatic experience, as referred to here, appears

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<sup>162</sup> Butler, *Western Mysticism*, xxxii.

<sup>163</sup> Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 13.

<sup>164</sup> Timothy Luke Johnson, *Religious Experience in Earliest Christianity* (Minneapolis, 1998), p. 48.

<sup>165</sup> Gregory I, *Homily on Ezekiel*, 2: 2: 4, tr. Theodosia Tomkinson (Etna, 2008), p. 282.

<sup>166</sup> Plotinus, *Enneads* 4.8.1, tr. Stephen MacKenna (Stratford, 1914), p. 200.

<sup>167</sup> Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* 12: 12: 25, tr Taylor, vol. 2, p. 196.

to be a grace or gift, the source of which is attributable to God, and is not induced or engendered by the activities of the recipient.

This is in stark contrast to actively pursued ecstatic experience,<sup>168</sup> where, across a range of belief systems and cultures, including Christian, music and dance may be seen as prominent, if not essential. Whilst the highest levels of ‘passive’ ecstasy may exist in a meditative<sup>169</sup> ‘quiet zone’, this is not the case in more volatile circumstances of sight and sound occurring where the ecstatic quest<sup>170</sup> is assisted by music and dance. Just as pagan ritual might commence with a musical prelude intended to grip the emotions of those present,<sup>171</sup> so Christians were accused of exciting ‘their hearers to the point of frenzy with flute music like that heard among the priests of Cybele’<sup>172</sup> at the commencement of their ceremonies. In the context of such pagan practice, Quasten brings to our attention that the aulos played *Phrygium religiosum* (implying the Phrygian mode<sup>173</sup>) has a ‘peculiar capability, which brought on religious ecstasy, [and] assured to flute music the highest place in all orgiastic cults’.<sup>174</sup> In what Quasten refers to as ‘a state of enthusiasm approaching madness’<sup>175</sup> the worshipers of Cybele lash themselves to frenzy while ‘the Phrygian flutist plays upon his deep-sounding twisted reed ... [with] the clang of the cymbals ... the tambourines .. the sound of shrill screams’.<sup>176</sup> Aristotle writes of sacred melodies ‘which fill the soul with religious excitement’.<sup>177</sup> Lucian describes how, ‘with flute music, the clashing of cymbals ... ecstatic singing ... frenzy falls on many’.<sup>178</sup> Philodemos of Gadara writes

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<sup>168</sup> That drugs such as marijuana, LSD, and mescaline can be argued as producing altered states of consciousness not totally unlike states of ecstasy referred to in this chapter, is, except where brief mention seems especially relevant, regarded as a discussion area beyond the remit of this study.

<sup>169</sup> This is not necessarily to couple ‘meditation’ with ‘passive’ ecstasy. Certain meditative practices – e.g. some forms of yoga – are clearly more active than passive, as is briefly commented on elsewhere in this study.

<sup>170</sup> That academic study of Christianity has, on occasion, taken the view that ‘ecstasy and healing is not “authentic” religion, certainly not “authentically Christian,” and should therefore be relegated to a separate category called “popular religion,” deserving of dismissal rather than serious study’, see Luke Johnson, *Religious Experience*, p. 3.

<sup>171</sup> *MW*, p. 40.

<sup>172</sup> Celsus, *True Doctrine*, p. 71.

<sup>173</sup> On modes, see chapter three, pp. 130-133, of this study.

<sup>174</sup> *MW*, p. 36.

<sup>175</sup> *MW*, p. 36.

<sup>176</sup> Catullus 63, *MW*, p. 36.

<sup>177</sup> Aristotle, *Politics* 1342a, tr. Barker, p. 350.

<sup>178</sup> Lucian, *Dea Syria* 50, *MW*, p. 37.

of crowds ‘trying to fall into a divinely-inspired incubation and divinely-infused ecstasy’ to the accompaniment of tambourines.<sup>179</sup>

That spiritualities, Christian and other, demonstrate a widespread experience of the ecstatic, is brought to our attention by a number of writers. Cuthbert Butler, for example, reminds us that ‘the experiences of all mystics, non-Christian as well as Christian, are couched in the same language’.<sup>180</sup> June McDaniel, in *The Madness of the Saints*, cited above, describes the search for ecstasy as not unique to Bengal, or even to India – it ‘has long been explored in various traditions: in both Eastern Orthodox and Western Christianity, among Hasids of eastern Europe, among the Sufis’.<sup>181</sup> Writing on ecstatic religion in Bengal, McDaniel maintains that ‘devotional ecstasy is defined as a radical alteration of perceptions, emotions, or personality which brings the person closer to what he regards as the sacred’,<sup>182</sup> and in a concept not unlike that of ‘passivity’ and ‘activity’, contrasts a devotional ecstasy which ‘requires immobility, solitude, sensory deprivation’ with one ‘which involves movement, sound, company, sensory overstimulation’.<sup>183</sup>

#### *Ecstasy in the context of worship.*

Of course it may be challenged whether, in the context of worship, the desire for ecstatic experience<sup>184</sup> has any place at all. As David Brown writes, ‘worship should be given to God because he is valued in and of himself irrespective of any experiences it may bring’.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Philodemos of Gadara, *On the Gods* 1: 18, *MW*, p. 37. Incubation and divinely-infused ecstasy are clearly amongst the practices enthusiastically ‘carried over’ from pagan to early Christian religious experience. See chapter one of this study.

<sup>180</sup> Butler, *Western Mysticism*, p. 240.

<sup>181</sup> McDaniel, *Madness*, p. 7.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> Of course, some distinction can be argued between the ‘passive’ ecstasy bestowed on some, and the ecstasy sought after by others – whether ‘others’ use the stimulation of music and dance, or, especially during the past half-century, the stimulation of psychedelic drugs. Beyond brief discussion in this chapter, adjudication of different states of ecstasy is not regarded as the business of this study.

<sup>185</sup> David Brown, *God and Mystery in Words: Experience through Metaphor and Drama* (Oxford, 2008), p. 74.

The concept of emotional devotion, whether or not achieving ‘ecstasy’, unavoidably leaves the door open to accusations concerning motive.<sup>186</sup> Is God, as the object of love, the attraction? Or is it the emotional act of loving – of ‘savouring the qualitative aspect of emotional life’,<sup>187</sup> trivially described by Jerrold Levinson as ‘like Des Esseintes, the hero of Huysman’s *A Rebours*, revelling in the flavours conveyed by a mouth organ fitted with a variety of liqueurs’?<sup>188</sup> But some doubt may exist as to whether a clear distinction can be made, and, pertaining to this study, whether during the early centuries of Christian worship, was made, between commitment to the devotional homage due to God, and the (possibly ecstatic) experiences arising from devotional practice. Indeed the heavenly life might be seen as precipitated by ecstatic experience while its recipient is still ‘on earth’.<sup>189</sup> As Augustine writes:

Sometimes You admit me to a state of mind that I am not ordinarily in, a kind of delight which could it ever be made permanent in me would be hard to distinguish from the life to come.<sup>190</sup>

The role of music in the heavenly life has been discussed in chapter one. Music and dance as religious practices rooted in ‘everyday life’ – yet with possible ecstatic consequences – is our concern here.

### *Whirling, and ring dancing.*

Whirling is certainly a form of ecstasy-invoking dance common to diverse spiritualities. In the late 1930s Curt Sachs wrote that ‘all the countries that bordered the Mediterranean in ancient times, and the less remote sections of Asia as well, appear to have had whirl dances’.<sup>191</sup> As already lightly touched on, in the periods before, during, and after that of prime concern to this study (-680 A.D.) members of

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<sup>186</sup> In not dissimilar vein Georg Feuerstein writes in regard to *yogins*, ‘Ecstasies, visions, and psychic phenomena are not at all the point of spiritual life ... they are by-products rather than the goal of authentic spirituality. *Sacred Paths* (Burden, NY, 1991), p. 17.

<sup>187</sup> Jerrold Levinson ‘Music and negative emotion’, *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 63 (1982), p. 339.

<sup>188</sup> Levinson, ‘Negative emotions’, p. 339.

<sup>189</sup> The theme of ‘meditative absorption’ is of course common to many spiritualities. Feuerstein, for example (see note above on *yogins*) writes ‘At the end of the process lies the complete unification of subject and object, the merging of the “knower,” the “known,” and the act of “knowing” ... this state is called *Samadhi*, or ecstasy. *Sacred Paths*, p. 171.

<sup>190</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* . 10. 15. 65. See Louth, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, p. 137.

<sup>191</sup> Sachs, *World History of Dance*, p. 43.



various religious groupings, including Jews, pagans, and Christians sought ecstasy in the trance achievable through the music and the vigorous dance motion of ‘whirling’. An example might be seen in David, who ‘danced, whirling round with all his might’.<sup>192</sup> As M. Clark and C. Crisp bring to our attention, the word for dance most used by Old Testament writers is *hul* which refers to the whirl of the dance and implies highly active movement.<sup>193</sup> Cicero writes of whirling pagan priests in *De Divinatione*.<sup>194</sup> That such practices were prevalent in the fourth century A.D. is described by Symmachus, who writes of pagan priests whirling to the music of cymbals, drums, and auloi. In Greek art the swinging followers of Dionysus (swinging symbolising the act of being poised between two worlds<sup>195</sup>), heads thrown back, are frequently depicted. Perhaps the best known example would be the Muslim ‘Whirling Dervishes’ whose ritual blossomed in the twelfth century<sup>196</sup> – though Christian and non-Christian examples of ‘whirling’ and other forms of trance-inducing dance are evident both later and earlier<sup>197</sup> than the first Dervishes. The continuity of whirling, in a Christian context is brought to our attention by Gerald of Wales, commenting on ancient practices still observable in the Christians of twelfth century Wales, writing of dancers:

bailing on the ground as in a trance, then jumping up as in a frenzy ... on being brought into the church, and led up to the altar with their oblations, you will be astonished to see them suddenly awakened and coming to themselves.<sup>198</sup>

Other early Christian examples include the fifth century ‘mysterious Severinus’<sup>199</sup> who danced ‘to the sound of strange music, whirling<sup>[200]</sup> gracefully and skilfully’ on

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<sup>192</sup> 2 Samuel. 6:14

<sup>193</sup> M. Clark and C. Crisp, *The History of Dance* (New York, 1981), p. 35.

<sup>194</sup> Cicero, *De Divinations* 2. 50, Oesterley, *Sacred Dance*, p. 126.

<sup>195</sup> Robert A. Johnson, *Ecstasy: Understanding the Psychology of Joy* (New York, 1987), p. 83.

<sup>196</sup> For description of the musical instruments used to accompany the Dervishes, see Brown, *The Dervishes*, pp. 12, 115, 116, 130, and 141.

<sup>197</sup> More modern Christian examples might include the Russian Shlustes who claim their dance to be induced by the Holy Ghost. See Rouget, *Music and Trance*, p. 28.

<sup>198</sup> Gerald of Wales, *The Journey Through Wales*, tr. Lewis Thorpe (London, 1978), p. 92.

<sup>199</sup> Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, 1882) 4, p. 54.

<sup>200</sup> The objective of whirling, as described in the early fourteenth century, in Aflaki’s *The Lives of the Gnostics*, reads ‘[by] the whirling dance ... the flame of divine love spread to the different corners of

the banks of the Danube, and whose gifts, like so many prominent Christians of the time, allegedly included prophecy and miracle working.<sup>201</sup> In the context of dance having a significant role in healing<sup>202</sup> Martin of Tours (as briefly touched on earlier) witnessed Christians ‘afflicted [possessed by demons]...[who, when] whirled around in the air ... confess the Lords [i.e. the saints]’.<sup>203</sup>

The conversion of Constantine had of course brought a change in the Church’s fortunes – and a wider range of motives to trigger conversion. Pagan practices ‘carried over’ – indeed clung to by the Christian(ized) masses – demonstrate the powerful continuing role of music and dance in worship. Caesarius of Arles (470-542 A.D.), for example, writes of dancing ‘before the very churches of the saints ... carried over from pagan practice’.<sup>204</sup> An ongoing problem for ecclesiastical authority was the intransigence of the masses concerning retention of all-night vigils. Augustine speaks of making ‘concessions to their weakness and permit them ... to celebrate other feasts, in honour of the holy martyrs ... with a similar self-indulgence’<sup>205</sup> to that with which they devoted themselves to the religious ceremonies of their pagan past. An example of the continuation of Thracian pagan practice associated with ancient orgiastic cults of Dionysus, ‘carried over’ to the present day – replete with objections from (Greek Orthodox) ecclesiastical authority – is the *Anastenaria*, where (in northern Greece) participants dance ecstatically for hours to the music of the Thracian lyre, then, moved by the spirit of Constantine (in whose commemoration the Christianized version takes place), they enter an ecstatic trance, the extent of which is demonstrated as they walk barefoot over glowing-red coals.

Occasions on which active religious fervour might achieve the ecstatic, not infrequently make use of both music and dance as emotional stimulant, for example

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the earth ... [as] men busied themselves ceaselessly with worship, music, and most of all love. See Reynold Nicholson (tr.), *The Whirling Ecstasy* (San Antonio, 1954 [1926]), p. 28.

<sup>201</sup> Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints*, p. 517.

<sup>202</sup> The history of dance associated with healing is fully discussed in E. Louis Backman, *Religious Dances in the Christian Church and in Popular Medicine*, cited earlier in this study.

<sup>203</sup> Sulpicius Severus, *Vita S. Martini* 12, tr. F.R. Hoare (New York, 1965 [1954]), p. 26.

<sup>204</sup> Caesarius of Arles (470-542 A.D.), *Sermon 13*, tr. Mary Magdeline Mueller (Washington, 1956), pp 77-8.

<sup>205</sup> Augustine, *Epistle 29. 8-9, MW*, p. 172.

the swaying Ethiopian priests during the period of concern to this study and beyond, Christian and non-Christian ring dancing, and such ‘Whirling Dervishes’ as the Mevlana, who, in the early thirteenth century would ‘whirl in ecstasy in the middle of the streets’<sup>206</sup> in passionate activity, but where the participant is commanded by the Koran, to ‘war with his own wild passions, to change his evil feelings for those which are good’.<sup>207</sup> An indication of the geographical extent of whirling during the period which chiefly occupies this study, may be seen in the politically powerful figure of Wu Yen-hsiu, an exponent whirling in seventh century China.<sup>208</sup> A further example of more recent spiritually motivated bodily movement might be seen in the Shakers, who, in New England, well into the twentieth century, danced themselves into a religious fervour, shaking and trembling.<sup>209 210</sup>

Sight should not be lost, however, of instances where comment was more favourable.<sup>211</sup> In 678 A.D. the Council of Toledo commissioned Isidore of Seville to create a ritual rich in sacred choreography to be performed in the city’s seven churches.<sup>212</sup> Earlier indication of ecclesiastical encouragement of music and dance may be seen in the directive given by Victricius, bishop of Rouen, who, at his warmly welcomed return from Italy in the 380s urged his congregation, ‘play your instruments and mount the paths to heaven with your dances’.<sup>213</sup> Ecclesiastical authority’s response to ring dances, albeit within the context of what might be

<sup>206</sup> Shems Friedlander, *The Whirling Dervishes* (New York, 1992), p. 56.

<sup>207</sup> John Porter Brown, *The Dervishes; Or Oriental Spiritualism* (Tennessee, 1868), p. 112, citing the Koran XXIX 69.

<sup>208</sup> Nigel Cawthorne, *Daughter of Heaven* (Oxford, 2007), p. 238.

<sup>209</sup> Johnson, *Ecstasy*, p. 85.

<sup>210</sup> Not unrelated, within the context of physical movement as expressive of ecstasy, or expressive of its quest, the Quakers, whose members, historically at least, were said to ‘quake’ in their religious ecstasy. This may be reminiscent of Augustine trembling ‘with love and awe’ (*Confessions* vii 16).

<sup>211</sup> This is further discussed in chapter three.

<sup>212</sup> Ronald Gagne, *Dance in Christian Worship* (Washington, 1984), pp. 52 and 82. The continuation of danced worship in Seville is evidenced in 1439, when Don Jayne Palafox, archbishop of Seville forbade such dances. On appeal to Pope Eugenius IV, the dance was reinstated, the pope asserting ‘I see nothing in this children’s dance which is offensive to God. Let them continue to dance before the high altar’. See Annette Morton Pardue, *The Drama of the Dance in the Local Church* (Camarillo, 2005), p. 81. One present day continuation of children’s dance in Seville cathedral, see Marilyn Daniels, *The Dance in Christianity: A History of Religious Dance Through the Ages* (New York, 1981), pp. 22-24.

<sup>213</sup> Victricius, *De laude sanctorum* 5 (PL 20. 447), cited MacMullen, *Second Church*, p. 170. As Gillian Clark brings to our attention, music historians (e.g. Herval, in *Origines*) regard this as being practical not allegorical reference to music and dance. For introduction and annotated translation of *De laude sanctorum* see Gillian Clark, ‘Victricius of Rouen: Praising the Saints’, *Journal of Christian Studies* 7. 3 (1999), 365-399.

described as ‘officially sanctioned’ emotion, is not without ecclesiastical encouragement. Basil of Caesarea, Chrysostom, and Epiphanius, amongst others, write approvingly of Christians performing ring dances (e.g. Basil of Caesarea, ‘Could there be anything more blessed than to imitate on earth the ring-dance of the angels’;<sup>214</sup> Epiphanius, ‘once again perform the choral dances ... leap wildly ... dance ring dances’;<sup>215</sup> Chrysostom, ‘we have ... danced comely ring-dances’<sup>216</sup>). The Fathers do not, however, provide a description of what precisely takes place – presumably because those encouraged in such ring-dancing pursuits were fully familiar with a type of dance common to the celebrations of pagans and Christians alike. Such commonality between pagan and Christian ring dancing<sup>217</sup> doubtless accounted for the disapproval of Basil of Caesarea, who, writing of occasions when the performers, less emotionally restrained, ring-danced ‘as if seized by a kind of frenzy ... in the churches of the martyrs and at their graves... sully[ing] the earth with their feet’.<sup>218</sup> It can only be speculated as to whether the ring dancers approved by the Fathers reached a state of ecstasy, or stopped short, at a less fevered emotional pitch. But, approved of or not by ecclesiastical authority, it would stretch credulity to believe that Christianized former pagans, ‘carrying over’ their practices of music and dance, never reached a point of frenzy where some form of ecstatic experience might be stimulated.

### *Dancing with God.*

Viewed from the present age, when ring dances are not so commonly encountered, a description might be thought useful. To whatever extent ring dances share a similarity, it may not be inappropriate, in the absence of a description of Christian ring dancing, to cite a more recent description of non-Christian ring dancing, where a chorus:-

... arranged in a circle that sings and dances ... the goal being a progressive approach to the ecstatic state, which is achieved precisely by the monotony of

<sup>214</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Letter 40*, Backman, *Religious Dances*, p. 24.

<sup>215</sup> Epiphanius, *Sermon for Palm Sunday*, Richard Kraus, *History of the Dance* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1969), p. 48.

<sup>216</sup> Chrysostom, *Homilia ad Agricolas*, Backman, *Religious Dances*, p. 33.

<sup>217</sup> To name but two of the many cultures performing ring dances.

<sup>218</sup> Basil of Caesarea, *Sermon on Drunkenness I*, Backman, *Religious Dances*, p. 25.

the acclamations, repeated at first to a deliberately slow rhythm, and by progressive acceleration of their cadence.<sup>219</sup>

This is not without similarity to the description of dance at the Last Supper, as found in the Acts of John:<sup>220</sup>

Before I am given over to them [said Jesus] let us sing a hymn to the Father.  
So he bade us form a circle, as it were, holding each other's hands, and taking his place in the middle. He said 'Answer Amen to me' ... we, forming a circle, responded 'Amen' to him.<sup>221</sup>

Clearly what Jeanmaire describes as 'a circle that sings and dances' is established in the Acts of John.

Not totally dissimilar conclusions concerning dance in the Acts of John are reached by Barbara E. Bowe.<sup>222</sup> She writes of 'the participants in the dance in an ever closer union with the Lord, and with the divine realm where he now abides'.<sup>223</sup> Bowe sees a parallel between 'some aspects of the "Hymn of the Dance" [Acts of John] ... and the ancient Sufi tradition of the whirling dance, whose origins date to "the timeless shadows of Central Asian spirituality"[<sup>224</sup>']'. Citing Sarah Kaufman, *The Washington Post*, February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1997 – 'Through the whirling they seek to achieve a union with God' Bowe adds, 'the configuration and hermeneutic of both ... is a circular dance with leader in the centre and participants dancing in an outer circle, designed to achieve a mysterious union with each other and with God'.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos. Histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1951), p. 240, Rouget, *Music and Trance*, p. 81.

<sup>220</sup> As stated above, the 'orthodoxy' of texts cited is not regarded as a prerequisite for inclusion as Christian worship. That the devotion discussed is Christ-oriented is the determinant – not whether the Christianity is flavoured with Gnosticism, or influenced by 'heresy'.

<sup>221</sup> Acts of John 94:7, *MECL*, p. 25.

<sup>222</sup> Barbara E. Bowe, 'Dancing into the Divine: The Hymn of the Dance in the Acts of John', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 7. 1 (1999), pp. 83-104.

<sup>223</sup> Bowe, 'Dancing into the Divine', p. 101.

<sup>224</sup> Here Bowe cites Kabir Helminski, 'The Gate of Secrets', <http://www.sufism.org/society/semaz.html>

<sup>225</sup> Bowe, 'Dancing into the Divine', p. 101.

*Christian ecstatic cults.*

That within any active quest for ecstatic experience, for Christians, like others, the role of music has a conspicuous presence is clear from written, archaeological, and visual art sources discussed earlier in this study. As Christopher Page brings to our attention regarding the comments of Celsus on flute-stimulated frenzy allegedly experienced by Christians, ‘when Origen quotes the passage about the aulos and drum in his rebuttal of Celsus, he does not deny the charge’.<sup>226</sup> If the accusations of Celsus concern frenzied activity at the commencement of Christian assembly, Clement of Alexandria, in *Paedagogos* is equally condemnatory about those who, at the conclusion of the assembly, once outside, allow ‘themselves to be taken over ... by the sound of aulos and the rhythmic beating of dance’. They are also described as ‘singing and singing back again’<sup>227</sup> which *may* (some music historians speculate<sup>228</sup>) imply the use of responsorial psalmody in the context of a somewhat frenzied early Christian environment.

Some cognizance should be taken – appropriate on the grounds of linkage to music – of an abundance of written evidence describing states of ecstasy where the recipient is effectively a medium between ‘God’ (in the form of initiative by a higher spiritual power, such as may be described as action of the ‘Holy Spirit’<sup>229</sup>) and any assembled people who witness and may themselves be affected by such ecstatic occurrences. This may take the form of such phenomena as ‘prophecy’ or of ‘speaking in tongues’ (*glossolalia*) demonstrated by individual(s) in a state of ecstasy. R. Joseph Hoffmann goes so far as to comment that ‘certain churches of the Christian diaspora, despite efforts by the Jewish missionaries like Paul to curb their excesses, were ecstatic cults’.<sup>230 231</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 32.

<sup>227</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogos* 2: 4, *ANF* 2, pp. 248-9.

<sup>228</sup> *MECL*, p. 34 and Page, *Christian West*, p. 81.

<sup>229</sup> The *Pastor of Hermas* for example, states ‘and the man being filled with the Holy Spirit, speaks to the multitude, as the Lord wishes’. *The Pastor of Hermas*, II, *Ante-Nicene Fathers* 2, p. 28.

<sup>230</sup> R. Joseph Hoffmann, ‘Epilogue’, *Porphyry’s Against the Christians: The Literary Remains* (New York, 1994), p. 138.

<sup>231</sup> As briefly discussed elsewhere in this chapter, accusations concerning the use of stimulants other than music and dance – and of equally suspect, morally dubious association – were frequently levelled at Christians. Tertullian is clearly responding to such accusation when writing ‘anyone who has anything to offer from divine Scriptures, or from their own devising, is called into the centre [of the

Examples would include the second century travels of ('heretics') Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, visiting churches throughout (present day) Turkey and beyond, to share their ecstatic visions. Tertullian, himself a Montannist, describes how a 'sister' when 'psalms are sung', experiences 'an ecstasy of the spirit during the Sunday liturgy', when she 'sees and hears mysteries'.<sup>232</sup> Such scenes may be what Celsus had in mind<sup>233</sup> when describing aulos and drum music (instruments particularly associated with prophecy<sup>234</sup>), which at the start of their gathering, drives the Christians to a state of frenzy. Of the historical precedence linking music and prophecy, Quasten writes:-

The religious ecstasy introduced by music expressed itself either in an outburst of the emotions, thus giving rise to religious catharsis, or in a transfer to the state of prophecy ... From time immemorial music had been especially valued in the service of prophecy.<sup>235</sup>

#### *Early Christian Jewish writing.*

Discussion concerning the use of music and dance in the active pursuit of ecstasy, has largely focused on well documented evidence of pagan practices<sup>236</sup> legitimately or illegitimately, and arguably, obstinately, clung to in the devotional activities of the 'Christianized' masses. But to such cited pagan sources may be added the writings of first and second century Jewish Christians, some of which, intermittently, seem to

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assembly] to recite before God: thus a test is made of his drinking' (*Apologeticum* 39 16-18, Page, *Christian West*, p. 83. The subject of stimulation, or contrastingly, of attempted stilling of the emotions, by whatever means employed – including the imbibed or otherwise absorbed into the system – clearly constitutes a vast subject area with which engagement lies beyond the remit of this study, but it may be noted that as early as 300 B.C. the dried heads of the peyote cactus provided the Aztecs with a mescaline-like substance, and mushrooms provided psilocybin. See Walter N. Pahnke, 'Drugs and Mysticism', in John White (ed.), *The Highest State of Consciousness* (Guildford, 2012 [1972]), pp. 251-2.

<sup>232</sup> Tertullian, *De Anima* 9: 4, *MECL*, p. 82.

<sup>233</sup> Cited and referenced elsewhere in this study.

<sup>234</sup> Lucian, *Alexander* 9: 217, *MW*, p. 40.

<sup>235</sup> *MW*, p. 36.

<sup>236</sup> A reconstructed description of pagan practice during the early centuries of the Christian era, relating to frenzied/ecstatic dance, is cited by Oesterley – 'Stirred by the barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns, and screaming flutes, the inferior clergy whirled about in the dance with wagging heads and streaming hair, until rapt in a frenzy of excitement'. Oesterley, *Sacred Dance*, p. 127, citing Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, and Osiris* (1907), p. 250.

have enjoyed canonical status, which describe vocal and instrumental music and dance performed in worship.

Examples of such earlier writing might include the *Odes of Solomon*, generally regarded by scholars as the product of ‘Jewish’ Christian writing, composed by newly baptised Christians in the late first/early second century.<sup>237</sup> To whatever extent the psalms of David, in their reference to musical instruments indicate usage in Jewish worship of the time, it may be argued that likewise, the early Jewish Christian *Odes of Solomon* indicate a similar usage in earliest Christian worship. The *Odes* are not lacking in such references:

They who make songs shall sing the grace of the Lord Most High;  
And the Most High shall be known in His saints, to announce to those  
that have songs of the coming of the Lord;  
That they may go forth to meet him, and may sing to Him with joy and  
with the harp of many tones.<sup>238</sup>

To any intimation of the use of voice and harp in worship may be added the arguably ecstatic flavour of ‘I have been united to Him, for the Lover has found the Beloved’ or ‘And he carried me to His Paradise; where is the abundance of the pleasure of the Lord’.<sup>239</sup>

## 6. Chapter conclusion.

The focus of this chapter has been to form an impression of the different attitudes and responses to emotion which are identifiable in contrasting manifestations of early Christian life and worship. Clearly there is a potential for emotional intensity in what might be argued as one of the most commonly encountered of human activities, contemplation of the divine. Clearly too, ‘civilization’ has sought to codify relationship with the divine and direct the ‘raw’ emotion, which, in various guises,

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<sup>237</sup> Rutherford H. Platt (ed.), *The Forgotten Books of Eden* (New York, 1926), introduction to *Odes of Solomon*, p. 120.

<sup>238</sup> *Odes of Solomon*, 7: 19 and 24; 11: 18 -19.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 3: 8, 11, and 14.



grappling with the implications of some perceived ‘life-force’ has produced. Attitudes to emotion, and the role of emotion, be it expressed or repressed, is closely entwined with the means – the various ‘arts’ – which serve to record and express it. As discussed above, the role of music and dance, whether as a means of expressing emotion, manipulating emotion, or further stimulating it, is uniquely powerful.

The arts, perhaps especially the movements and sounds of music and dance, may appear to sit uneasily with the asceticism which swept through much of the Christianized world of this study. But whether our sights are fixed on the monasticism which gave rise to chanted psalmody, the priests of Ethiopia dancing to the drum, or the aulos wailing in popular lament, diverse states of musically stimulated emotion are apparent. Human creativity, driven by emotion, is the context in which are located (returning to Corrigan’s phraseology) both ‘officially sanctioned religious emotionality’ and the ‘rank and file experience’ associated with the popular devotions of the masses. On the foundation of such creativity, the irrepressible surfacing of music – vocal and instrumental – and dance, in early Christian worship, is unsurprising.

### **General conclusion.**<sup>1211</sup>

Statements by such scholars as James McKinnon and Edward Foley, arguing a total absence of instrumental music in early Christian worship, were stated at the outset of this thesis. The issues and questions raised by such comments establish and identify the ground central to this study. Does available evidence support the comment of Foley regarding ‘the total absence of any references to special singers, psalms, or cantors’?<sup>1212</sup> Foley’s argument is supported when James McKinnon brings to our attention ‘the remarkable testimony of Augustine in his *Retractationes* that Eucharistic psalmody was looked upon by some of his contemporaries as an objectionable innovation’.<sup>1213</sup> It is Foley’s contention that early Christian worship was so

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<sup>1211</sup> To avoid duplication, references provided in the chapters of this study are not necessarily repeated in this conclusion.

<sup>1212</sup> Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music*, p. 84.

<sup>1213</sup> *MECL*, p. 11.

totally devoid of instrumental music, that such music as there might be, 'was so exclusively vocal in its early stages that the occasion to criticize the use of instruments in church never arose'.<sup>1214</sup> If this is an accurate depiction, then, in answer to the question raised in the Introduction, an insurmountable obstacle may indeed block the path of any assessment of instrumental music in the context of early Christian worship, and less than a clearway may be encountered regarding vocal music and dance.

If, with McKinnon and Foley, the focus of our attention is on texts concerned to describe the approved activities taking place 'in church', within the Roman empire, examples of instrumental music and/or dance may be only infrequently met. But if we look beyond the church door, whether within the cemeteries of the Mediterranean world, or to more distant locations, such as Ireland, or Ethiopia, a contrast is observable, and the scene is certainly not devoid of instrumental music and dance. As cited earlier, Christopher Page brings to our attention, the light in which the ordinary Christian masses saw the role of music and dance in worship, may not be 'the same light as the Fathers who harangued them'.<sup>1215</sup>

The arguments concerning the use of musical instruments in Christian worship are to some extent encapsulated in the monographs of O. E. Payne and M. C. Kurfes cited at the outset of this thesis. Their confrontations, however, bookmark just one brief period (early twentieth century) in what has been, and continues to be, a subject arousing intellect and passion throughout the passage of Christian history. Today, a brief search of the internet on the subject of musical instruments and Christian worship, triggers a bombardment of material, mostly negative, confirming the ongoing nature of controversy and debate.

At a more scholarly level, in the decades preceding the writing of this study, the dogmatic assertions which had seemed to dominate the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, were challenged. Much of what was considered known, was conceded as being uncertain. As R.A. Markus wrote of Peter Brown, historians have been '... helped by him to look at the world of Late Antiquity with fresh eyes'.<sup>1216</sup> What was becoming clear was the extent to

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<sup>1214</sup> Foley, *Foundations of Christian Music*, p. 67, citing McKinnon, *Current Musicology*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>1215</sup> Page, *Christian West*, p. 32.

<sup>1216</sup> Markus, *Ancient Christianity*, xii.

which ‘... recent research makes a case for greater diversity of practice’,<sup>1217</sup> or expressed a little more strongly by Paul F. Bradshaw ‘... we know much, much less ... [about] the first three centuries of Christianity than we once thought we did’.<sup>1218</sup> Whilst during the period of writing this study some maintained the view that music in early Christian worship was purely vocal,<sup>1219</sup> emerging opinion was that ‘ordinary’ non-elite Christians may have been somewhat deaf to the directives of their ‘... bishops and other polemicists’<sup>1220</sup> attempting to discourage, if not suppress the playing of musical instruments, whether in worship or recreation.

This thesis attempts to make a contribution to establishing the extent of non-compliance, when customary forms of musical expression were treated as beyond the pale of acceptability in the worship of ordinary Christians. Whilst, until recently, this would seem to have been a neglected area of research, an even greater chasm of scholarly neglect, is discussion of the subject in contexts beyond the geographical confines of the Mediterranean world. Other cultures, as distant as Ireland, Ethiopia, and parts of India and China, clearly embraced Christianity within their cultures, some at a very early date. Evidence of music – sung, played, and danced to – is overwhelming. This would oftentimes seem to flourish with ecclesiastical approval and enthusiasm, as this study illustrates.

### *Christianized cultures - central and peripheral.*

The scene depicted by McKinnon and Foley, cited at the start of this thesis, is largely concerned with Christian worship as the elite Fathers of the early Church wanted it to be, willed it to be, and imaginatively described it as being. Their writings are mostly descriptive of the Mediterranean world seen in the light of their philosophical/theological heritage. Little or no sympathy is expressed regarding the uneducated masses, whose religious practices, oftentimes ‘carried over’ from their pagan past, sought modes of expressing Christian devotion, compatible with their own cultural heritage, but unlikely to be blessed with the approval of the Fathers. As has been discussed throughout this thesis, McKinnon’s focus on

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<sup>1217</sup> McGowan, ‘Naming the Feast’, p. 315.

<sup>1218</sup> Bradshaw, *The Search*, x.

<sup>1219</sup> For example, John Arthur Smith, cited in pp. 2-5 of this study.

<sup>1220</sup> Page, *The Christian West*, p. 32.

Christian worship ‘in church’ is a vastly incomplete picture of the totality of Christian practices in the Mediterranean world.

As this thesis has sought to indicate, examination of Christian practices limited to the Mediterranean world, reveals only part of the whole picture and ignores much of the most vivid and colourful evidence supporting the use of vocal and instrumental music, and dance, in Christian worship throughout the centuries of concern to this study. The array of drums and sistra of Ethiopian Christian tradition, together with the dancing priests of that country (among the first to officially adopt Christianity) offers swathes of evidence depicting the musical life of its liturgy. None of this is mentioned by McKinnon or Foley. That Irish love of the harp, evidenced, for example, in the action of (St) Kieran when raising from the dead, eight drowned harpers, and the slightly later evidence of Bede, that English bishops regarded a harpist in their retinue as highly desirable, clearly places that instrument above the level of blanket condemnation so frequently meted out by many of the Fathers. A wealth of evidence on the use of pipes and multi-toned bells, by Christian missionaries in Scotland, thanks to the work of John Purser, in this connection, leaves no room for doubt as to the use of musical instruments in the Christian worship of Scotland and further north. Whether in the north-westerly progress of Christianity through the cultures of England, Ireland, and Scotland, or south-easterly through India and China, no assessment is made by McKinnon or Foley concerning the role of musical instruments in the Christian worship of these places.

Perhaps the assertions of McKinnon and Foley can be seen as describing a ‘ripple effect’. At each wave the argument grows weaker, as geographical distance increases. At the centre, even ‘in church’ a continuous flow of canons<sup>1221</sup> suggest that attempts by the Fathers to maintain their prohibition of musical instrument playing cantors was less than totally effective. Outside the church door, whether within the confines of domestic family worship, or among the crowds congregated in the cemeteries, even at the geographical heart of Christendom, resilient Christian(ized) worshippers appear to have clung to much of their pre-‘conversion’ culture. When the ripples reach the cities of Roman north Africa, archaeological evidence, as discussed above, suggests that popular Christian worship, including music and

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<sup>1221</sup> Representative examples might include *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.32. 9, *MECL*, p. 111; *Nomocanon* of Michael of Damietta, Quasten *Music and Worship*, p. 103; Council of Laodicea, cc. 53 and 54.

dance, at suburban cemeteries, attracted greater numbers of participants than those accommodated in the city-centre churches. Ripples extending south to the Ethiopian Church meet music and dance led by its priests and deacons as the norm. Any ripples reaching the islands of north Britain and Ireland would seem to encounter a moral neutrality concerning music – even an affection for the harp. Such information as may be assembled concerning early Christianity in parts of India and China would not, as discussed in chapter one, seem incompatible with at least periods of inter-religious toleration, with a shared leaning towards the ascetic,<sup>1222</sup> within a culture where music and dance were integral to worship.

### *First centuries*

As even the most cursory observation of human behaviour demonstrates, when people gather for a purpose, elements of ceremonial are soon introduced, as those in attendance ‘make an occasion’ of it. Some form of ‘common meal’ may well be central to the first gatherings of the followers of Jesus, and what might have transpired on such occasions was likely to be dependant on what was thought and felt appropriate by those taking part. This sense of the appropriate could only be drawn from their personal experience – the influence of any previous (Jewish or pagan) religious rituals in which they may have participated; of being with other followers of Jesus; for some, even being with Jesus himself. From a wealth of texts, canonical and not, which many scholars<sup>1223</sup> interpret as indicating an element of music and dance in the prayerful companionship of Jesus and his closest followers, at least some of the earliest worship of putative ‘Christians’ can be argued as being inclusive of these activities.

Whatever the rituals of the first Christian gatherings, any new innovation, in a particular location, could soon become established tradition, and might differ from that which evolved elsewhere. By the early fifth century, the Christian historian Socrates was to record that ‘it is impossible anywhere, among all the sects, to find two churches which agree exactly in their ritual’.<sup>1224</sup> Within that diversity (a diversity increasingly brought to our attention by recent scholarship), ‘frenzied’ flute playing to enliven the emotions of an assembling Christian

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<sup>1222</sup> Asceticism in China is briefly discussed in chapter two.

<sup>1223</sup> E.g. Matthes Black, and Doug Adam, as discussed earlier.

<sup>1224</sup> Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, 5: 22 discussed earlier.

congregation seems to have provided Celsus with ammunition for his *Discourse Against the Christians*, and may have provoked corrective action by ecclesiastical authority – though as noted earlier, in his rebuttal of Celsus’ *Discourse*, Origen did not refute the charge concerning the presence of instrumental music at a Christian gathering. That successive synods reiterated the prohibition of cithara playing cantors ‘in church’ illustrates the measure of non-compliance. Beyond the church door, that popular devotions in cemeteries, inclusive of music and dance, involved such significant numbers, broadens beyond the concept of ‘in church’, any definition of Christian worship.

*Choral singing and instrumental support.*

At a ‘grassroots’ practical level, a strong case supports the almost unavoidable use of musical instruments in the training of early Christian choirs. McKinnon concedes that in training choirs of virgins and boys to sing his hymns, it is not out of the question that Ephraem employed a cithara when, as the *Acta Ephraemi* informs us, he ‘was in their midst as their father and citharist’. Bardesanes would seem to have done likewise, the *Acta Ephraemi* recording that ‘a group of boys came to Bardesanes, these he taught to sing to the cithara’. The temptation to retain instrumental support, should singing remain stubbornly weak, might challenge the resolve of successive generations of choir directors. Indeed the need might be seen as greatest not in instances where a illustrious figure such as Ephraem or Bardesanes attracts the enthusiastic response of prospective choir members, but in the modest choral efforts of small Christian communities, where the cantor’s role may extend to disseminating a hymn or psalm tune, and a few well chosen notes plucked on the cithara might lessen the exasperation of all – excepting, perhaps, any instrument-disapproving onlookers. The continuing necessity of such support is evidenced by the gift of an organ to Charlemagne, from Michael I, to assist the teaching of plainchant.

*Ceremonial: religious and civil entwinement.*

As briefly discussed in chapter three, in contexts where the magnificence of Post-Constantinian ceremonial expresses the converged aspirations of Church and State, the musical content of such ceremonial, as examined by Wellesz more than fifty years ago, offers intriguing avenues for further research. For example, instances brought to our attention by

Wellesz include insights regarding ecclesiastically under-pinned state occasions, where ceremonial processing through the streets was not necessarily halted by the church door. Not without some interaction of secular and religious politics, the musicality of publicly celebrated occasions would seem likely to involve such elements as a band, or at least a portable hydraulis, and possibly groups of singers and dancers. This somewhat neglected area of study may add considerably to arguments confirming the musicality of any broad based concept of Christian worship within (and more especially beyond) the period examined in this study. This may prove particularly relevant to the role of the hydraulis in such civic/religious ceremonial.

### *The hydraulis.*

The evidence for some use of the hydraulis (water organ) throughout many of the centuries of Christian worship with which this study is concerned, can be seen as quite compelling. Whilst the volume of sound which such instruments could produce, render the hydraulis unsuitable in the context of Christian worship in secret, the reverse applies from the fourth century, when the proclamation of officially adopted Christianity, might find its ear catching qualities something of a counterpart to the evangelistic use of pipes and multi-toned bells by Celtic missionaries. Remarks such as those of Jerome, on the power of an organ at Jerusalem, may or may not imply its use in Christian worship, but in no way is the sound of the instrument condemned. With some intimation of spiritual elevation, for Isaac of Antioch the sound of the water organ released ‘the strings of the lyre of my soul’.<sup>1225</sup> Although a musical instrument used in pagan worship, comment on the hydraulis, in the writings of the Fathers portrays the instrument in a more positive light than might be expected. It seems to be liked by the Fathers. The organ of fourth/fifth century design, depicted in a church floor mosaic,<sup>1226</sup> to which may be added the inscriptions on early Christian sarcophagi which depict the hydraulis and identify its players, strongly suggests its use in Christian worship.

Recent years have seen considerable interest in the hydraulis.<sup>1227</sup> The question of whether the tuning of surviving hydraulis pipes may suggest compatibility with modes approved by

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<sup>1225</sup> Isaac of Antioch, Perrot, *The Organ*, p. 64.

<sup>1226</sup> See earlier in this chapter, p. 150.

<sup>1227</sup> E.g. the work of Susanne Ruhling, in Berlin, is discussed in chapter three.

ecclesiastical authority for use in sung Christian worship, invites further study. That accounts of organs in churches and cathedrals of the ninth century refer to technical specification and express no surprise at the presence of such instruments in places of Christian worship, may not unreasonably be thought suggestive of a previous organ building tradition associated with Christian worship. At the boundaries of the time span examined in this study, the comments of so prominent a churchman as Aldhelm (d. 709 AD), concerned to describe the gilding of the front ranks of pipes of Anglo-Saxon organs,<sup>1228</sup> further illustrates the non-condemnatory nature of comment.

### *Use and suppression.*

Clearly within the Roman empire, the music of religious worship ‘in church’ was subjected to varied forms of restraint. It can be imagined that a cantor ‘carried away’ in singing a *jubilus*, might catch the steely glance of a disapproving elder. Suppression seems a likely response, were a precocious artistic licence presumed to validate the tones of the cithara, or should the physical movements of gesture and body language reach the danced level of choreographed praise, the restraining hand would be felt. But as discussed earlier, the shadow of restraint did not fall in equal measure on the whole of Christendom. In Christian cultures as different as Ireland and Ethiopia, a sufficient insight can be gained to comprehend scenes of diverse Christian worship certainly not devoid of singing, instrument playing and dance.

The unique role of music and dance as vehicles of emotional expression, was discussed at the very start of this study. It is also the subject of its final chapter, where the philosophical background to late antique attitudes towards the passions/emotions, and the influence of those attitudes on ‘officially sanctioned religious emotionality’<sup>1229</sup> by the masses, is discussed. The place of music in Christian worship being the subject of this study, conditions which stretch beyond emotionality to the ecstatic, where music and dance are demonstrably the driving stimulants, take the subject of communication with the divine to its ultimate goal. To the extent that communication through melody and rhythm may be as hard-wired in the human condition as instincts towards religious devotion, it may be argued as unsurprising that the

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<sup>1228</sup> Perrot, *The Organ*, pp. 224 and 293; Baker, *The Organ*, p. 24.

<sup>1229</sup> Corrigan, *Religion and Emotion*, as cited earlier.



role of music and dance in early Christian worship proves inherently irrepressible – whether its first green shoots be nurtured by use, or pruned by the secateurs of attempted suppression.

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